

Dealing with female brain-drain in rural Europe: results from the CENTRAL EUROPE project WOMEN

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forum



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Matthias Schaarwächter, Anika Schmidt [Eds.]**

Dealing with Female Brain-Drain in Rural Europe: Results from the CENTRAL EUROPE Project WOMEN

The following contents refer to studies which were conducted in the framework of the WOMEN Project. WOMEN is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund).



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Instead of a Preface: Voices and Impressions from the CENTRAL EUROPE Project WOMEN



GYULA GELENCSÉR
South Transdanubian Regional Development
Limited Company, Pécs (HU)

„The Awareness Raising Campaign and the events gave the women important impetus to shape their own roads to success. Thus, they can enrich the region with their professionalism and contribute to its vitality together with their families.”

”

”

AGNIESZKA KOJDER-WALASZEK
Rzeszow Regional Development Agency, Rzeszow (PL)

“The WOMEN project positively affected the women’s perception of self-employment and personal development as access opportunities to the labour market, to career development and self-fulfillment. Through the Pilot Actions young women received the necessary support to specify their future plans locally in the region.”



ANDRZEJ PARAFINIUK
Podlaska Regional Development Foundation, Białystok (PL)

“Thanks to the WOMEN project, problems related to migration and demographic change became more visible. Project’s activities and positive reactions from beneficiaries showed us that there is need for tailored interventions in all European regions even where the problem is not yet noticed.”

”

”

WILFRIED KÖHLER
Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt, Magdeburg (DE)

“In the future, all decisions to be taken should consider the implications for young people, especially for young women. The WOMEN project has strongly contributed to this sensitisation.”





KARIN WIEST

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Leipzig (DE)

“Networks, campaigns and events have revealed the creativity of young women and brought insights into their needs and expectations. The public awareness for the significant impact of this population group on rural development in Europe has definitely been raised.”

”

”

ANDREAS SCHWEITZER

Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt, Magdeburg (DE)

“The experiences gained within the WOMEN project revealed the huge additional value of European co-operation: The transnational exchange of experiences fostered new impetus, solution approaches and networking of the stakeholders in all participating regions.”



CAROLIN KAUFHOLD

Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt, Magdeburg (DE)

“Through the success stories of the women it was achieved to raise the awareness for this topic and to improve the image of rural space in all regions. The transnational and regional exchange between the winners, the participants of the juries, networks and Demography Coaches strengthened them in their daily work and confidence.”

”

1 Relevance and Intention of the CENTRAL EUROPE Project WOMEN (*Karin Wiest*)

1.1 Gendered Migration in Rural Europe: Reasons and Consequences

Demographic imbalances between women and men are a phenomenon which has been observed within rural Europe over decades. Research has shown that those imbalances are a result of gendered mobility patterns with women leaving rural areas at higher rates than men (CORBETT 2007, DAHLSTRÖM 1996, STOCKDALE 2004). In particular economically weak, remote and sparsely populated regions tend to be affected by the exodus of young women (ESPON & IFL 2012).

The main explanations for the differences in female and male migration behaviour refer to the changes in the working world over the course of the transition from agrarian and industrial to post-industrial labour market structures. In conjunction with an increasing female educational orientation and labour participation young women are attracted at higher rates by employment and educational opportunities accessible in bigger cities (CORBETT 2007, RASMUSSEN 2011). Labour market structures dominated by forestry, industry and manufacturing, which tend to offer fewer options to women than to men, may be a reason for why remote and economically weak regions are affected by the selective out-migration of young women. Beyond that, different studies also point to traditional gender stereotypes and certain lifestyles as one of the factors which influence the out-migration of young women from rural areas (e.g. CAMARERO ET AL. 2009, BERG 2004). In this context a growing cultural gap between modern, mobile young women and rather traditional young men has been discussed in particular in the frame of Scandinavian studies (e.g. DAHLSTRÖM 1996). Further important influencing factors are supposed to be as manifold as the accessibility of urban centres, infrastructure facilities, social relations and family policies. Summing up, women seem to choose contexts that facilitate their personal development, education and integration in the labour market and recently those contexts tend to be rather urban.

With the growing interest in the causes of gendered migration, also concerns over its impacts on rural development and the social sustainability of rural areas have increased. For the regions affected by selective out-migration negative effects on the regional image, on the social cohesion of communities, a thinning out of social networks and unfavourable consequences for the regional economies have been reported (e.g. WEBER & FISCHER 2010, ESPON & IFL 2012). Moreover there are concerns that a skills shortage in particular in female-dominated areas of the labour market and the service sector is likely to become a negative locational factor. The out-migration of young well-educated women from structurally weak rural regions in Europe is basically supposed to exacerbate the economic, demographic and social problems of the territories concerned (see figure 1).

Before introducing the strategy and intention of the CENTRAL EUROPE project WOMEN, the aim of the following section is to highlight the multitude of approaches that may influence female migration decisions in rural areas to shed light on the question of how to deal with the complexity of this topic.

1.2 Cross-Sectional and Multilevel Approaches to Counteract Female Brain-Drain

Taking the negative impacts of selective migration on rural development into account, the options for dealing with female brain-drain refer to various policy approaches that are mutually related. On the one hand basic demographic strategies have to be considered that target the problem of depopulation and overaging on a very general level. On the other hand strategies have to deal with different policy areas like the labour market, public infrastructure as well as educational structures to counteract female out-migration. Since young women are not a homogenous group but represent various living situations, it also seems crucial to take the different needs of particular sub-groups into account.

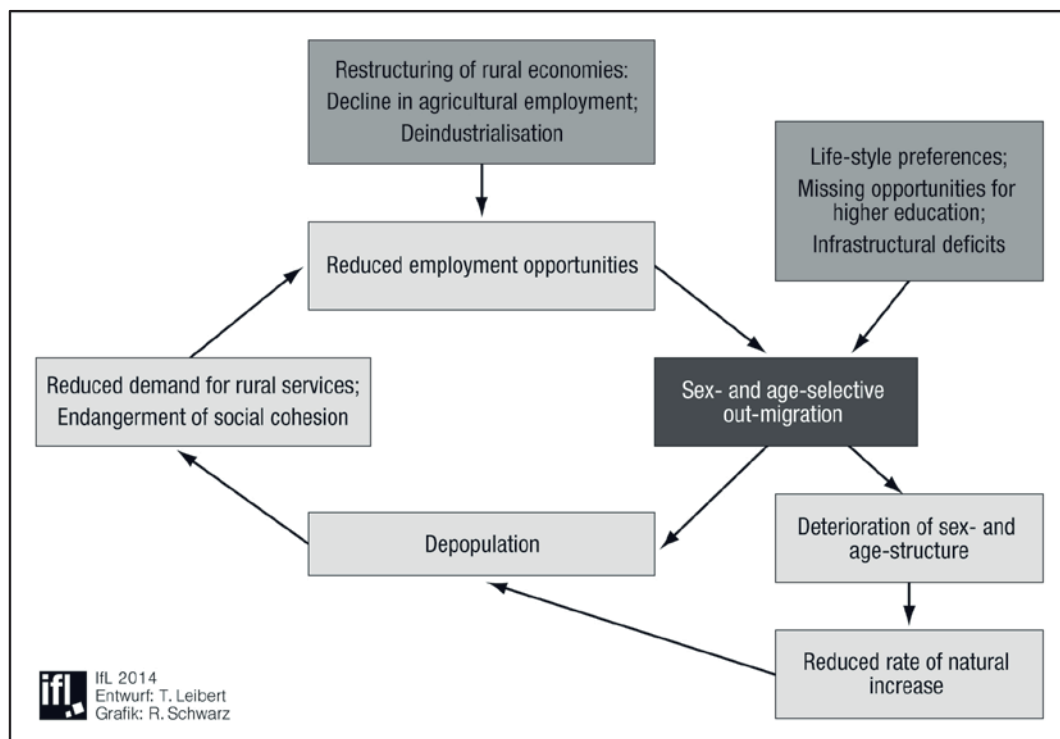
Multitude of demographic strategies:

In order to tackle the out-migration of young women from rural areas strategies that prevent out-migration as well as strategies that promote the in-migration of young women (integration) or the promotion of re-migration have to be considered. First of all the current perspectives of young women living in the regions such as educational facilities and job opportunities have to be evaluated when dealing with the problem of out-migration. It should not be forgotten, that leaving is often important for the personal development of young people as well as to enhance employability. Therefore strategies mainly targeted on keeping young people in their home region are not intended. On the other hand it cannot be overlooked that those wanting to stay should be enabled to use their talents and skills locally. Thus, measures targeted to improving the knowledge of young people about the current professional opportunities in their region are required.

It should also be highlighted that regional and local demographic problems are often caused rather by low in- and re-migration than by out-migration itself. Therefore the question of how (female) in- and return-migration can be encouraged is also an important issue. A lack of openness to new ideas and lifestyles on the part of the rural communities may be an obstacle. Especially foreign migrants hardly move to rural areas but to urban centres where new and more anonymous 'bridging' social capital is created. With regard to the question of how regions could attract skilled workers so-called 'cultures of welcoming' and how to implement them into a rural society have to be critically discussed. Here local companies as well as local associations and clubs are invited to develop ideas and attitudes to better integrate (female) newcomers from other regions and countries. Since these institutions are primarily affected by a lack of workforce or active members they should open up for newcomers under the pressure of demographic changes. In this respect different types of migrants with different needs have to be considered to develop suitable strategies. But also the heterogeneous regional framework conditions require tailor-made concepts for integration policies on the regional and communal level. *Returning migrants* are often considered as a labour reserve when a shortage of skilled labour becomes apparent. Re-migration programmes normally intend to attract people that possess the skills, means and will to boost regional development. Nevertheless people re-migrate for very different reasons. Returnees that have been economically successful in the area of destination and want to found a business in their home region are different from migrants returning because they have become unemployed or have not been able to integrate into the

host society. It has been shown that the re-migration of women is often related to social relations, family reasons or a partnership (ESPON & IFL 2012, WALSH 2014). Therefore the job opportunities of the partner, the environment to raise children and the choice of housing are equally important aspects when aiming at attracting young women to come back. Last but not least measures targeted to *curbing the negative consequences of out-migration* have to be mentioned. They address the shortage of skilled labour, ensure the accessibility of public services and goods (schools, health care, technical infrastructure, public transport) and are generally intended to halt vicious circles (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Selective migration and loss of critical masses



Source: Own design according to BOYLE et al. (1998)

A horizontal policy issue:

Dealing with the migration of young women from rural areas is a typical horizontal policy issue and targets a wide range of different policy fields. In the following some main fields of action are summarised to show the complexity of this task:

When aiming at improving the *job and educational situation for young women* the provision of diversified, knowledge-based and post-fordist labour market structures are a key issue, which is very hard to tackle. With regard to a shortage of skilled labour companies are required to develop new ideas to retain specialists and win over qualified young members of staff. Especially for women concepts that enable an ideal and flexible reconciliation of family and work and being sensitive towards women's needs could be an important asset. Beyond that, attempts to gain women for professions which are traditionally a domain of men (for example in production and heavy industry) and to break up the gender-related choice of work and education can be an additional part of a strategy.

Another important topic are unfavourable *regional images* that are usually directly related with a lack of regional self-confidence. Often the regions affected by out-migration have not managed to market themselves as desirable places to live. Therefore the perception of the regions is partly biased by false presumptions. Studies have shown that especially young women are often very critical about their home region (ESPON & IFL 2012). At the same time a lack of options for a positive identification for women can be assumed. In order to overcome those deficits female role models that have a certain connection to the region seem to be very important. Successful women living in the region and succeeding in business, in political or public life such as female mayors, entrepreneurs and artists can offer a welcome focus of identity for girls and young women as well.

The *provision with services of general interest* often plays a vital role for the living situation of young women. In particular for women with children the quality and accessibility of child care facilities and schools is an important aspect. Narrowing the financial scope of public budgets and increasing competition for funds between regions and municipalities endangers the regional actors' ability to maintain social and technical infrastructures in sparsely populated regions. Promoting voluntary work and commitment is often considered to be a solution in this respect which is additionally targeted to raise place attachment and increase the quality of life. The maintenance of public services in rural areas is not only a question of supply but is also related to image aspects and social life in rural communities in general. Beyond that those institutions like kindergardens, schools and nurseries are often important employers for women living in rural areas. Therefore cutbacks in these sectors tend to contradict the aim of keeping young women in the region.

Women are not a homogeneous group:

Strategies are more target-oriented when they focus on specific groups. With regard to female migration different phases of the lifecycle are connected with different needs and motives. In order to better understand the migration behaviour of young women the living conditions of the adolescents that still visit school and still live in their home region (age about 18 years and younger), the phase when starting to study or entering the labour market (usually between 18 and 25 years) and the phase when starting a family which usually takes place in the late twenties/early thirties are worth deeper consideration.

Experiences in childhood and youth often set the course for later migration biographies. In particular the role and influence of the parents, teachers and other role models have to be considered to convey a more positive attitude towards the region. In order to counteract the emergence of a regional culture of out-migration the active involvement of youths in local institutions or associations can foster place attachment and bonds to the home region. Offers attracting girls are required in particular. In decision-making and practices special attention has to be paid to young people in general and in particular to young women. Basically there is a need for concepts that raise consciousness for local opportunities by improving collaboration between schools and employers.

In the age between 18-25 years young people often migrate for education and studies or their first working place. It is the age group with the strongest out-migration. 'Learning mobility' is an important factor at this age. In the context of prospective re-migration it should be regarded as a chance for regional development. In this respect it has to be considered that people with roots in the region are on the one hand more willing to return, on the other hand they transfer a more positive image of the area of origin when they are away from home. Concepts to address this group that will probably live outside the regions to a large extent should develop a culture of 'leaving the door open' and stimulate an atmosphere of welcoming people to the region. Therefore the support of associations that match the needs and the interests of young women and strengthen the ties to the home region are crucial in targeting this particular group. Beyond that regional universities are an important locational factor for this age group. The offered degree courses should, on the one hand, be popular among women or directly address women to attract female students. On the other hand the educational system should also fit the regional needs to avoid strong out-migration after finishing studies if the regional labour market does not offer suitable jobs.

In the age group 30-35 years measures that support starting a family and coping with the challenge of family and career are important to attract re-migrants as well as to retain the locals. In this context the promotion of family-friendly policies, the availability of attractive child care facilities and the possibilities of reconciling family and employment (part-time jobs, re-integration after parental leave) in local businesses are important aspects. Since professional skills and job experience are usually already acquired concepts that promote the foundation of female enterprises and entrepreneurship could support young women in this age group. Furthermore in the course of generational changes of enterprises women should be attracted and supported to take over businesses.

Considering the variety of strategies to impact female migration the focus of the CENTRAL EUROPE project WOMEN was on the one hand on the field of the labour market and on the other hand on the perception of the regions under consideration. The measures were tailored to young women in the age between 16 and 35 years, which comprises very different biographical situations and important phases in life and career as shown above.

*Photo 1: Vacant buildings (left), female networking and commitment (right) in Europe's rural regions
(© T. Leibert, WOMEN project)*



1.3 The Intention of the Project WOMEN within the Overall European Policy Context

As WOMEN deals with the willingness to migrate and addresses the particular needs of young women living in rural, remote and sparsely populated areas, the objective of the project refers directly to the crucial question of equivalent living conditions in European peripheral and core areas. The local employment situation, educational opportunities, accessibility of infrastructures and the reconciliation of professional and family life are important determinants to deal with selective migration from rural areas, to foster territorial cohesion and to ensure equal opportunities as well. As described above, the objective of the project touches multiple policy aspects, which cross over very different fields of action and which is related in principle to many EU strategies and development programmes in a particular way. Therefore the topic is a typical cross-sectional oriented task closely related to key principles of the place-based approach to policy making highlighted in the Territorial Agenda 2020. Beyond that, the respective key aspects of the project namely 'women', 'youth' and 'rurality' are directly related to several EU strategies: The rural development strategy (2007-2013), the EU Youth Strategy (2010-18) and last but not least the EU gender equality strategy (2010-2015): The latter highlights the target to get more women into the labour market and help to reach the Europe 2020 target employment rate of 75 % overall for women and men. Moreover the aim to promote female entrepreneurship and self-employment and to get more women into jobs in economic decision-making has to be emphasised in this context.

The CENTRAL EUROPE project WOMEN

Against this backdrop and built on results of the previous projects SEMIGRA (ESPON & IFL 2013) and YURA the project WOMEN was intended to develop concrete measures and evaluating strategies that are useful to counteract the brain-drain of well-educated and skilled young women from rural areas in Europe. The focus of the activities was at improving the regional job prospects of young women in the regions challenged by out-migration. A relevant question was how local businesses could be enabled to strengthen the job opportunities of young women. In this respect the demand to improve the reconciliation of work and family was a related issue. Beyond that positive effects on regional development should be triggered via Awareness Raising Campaigns that target young women in particular. In the frame of a transnational knowledge exchange the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt (Germany) as a lead partner of the project tried to develop and implement corresponding new strategies together with ten partners in five Central European Countries. The project partners involved originate from six different rural areas all affected by a loss of young skilled people. They represent regional development agencies, educational institutions and a scientific institute (table 1).

Table 1: Project partners and partner regions

Country	Region	Partner
Germany	Saxony-Anhalt	Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt (lead partner)
		Educational Institute of Industry and Commerce Saxony-Anhalt
	Saxony	Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Leipzig
Hungary	South Transdanubia	South Transdanubian Regional Development Limited Company
		South Transdanubian Regional Resource Centre
Slovenia	Pomurje	University for Adult Education Murska Sobota
		Institute for Social Development Murska Sobota
Poland	Polaskie	Podlaska Regional Development Foundation
	Podkarpackie	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency
Austria	Styria	ZAM Styria GmbH - Regional Contact Office for Women
		Innovation Region Styria GmbH

In particular, the following Pilot Actions were implemented in the six case study regions Saxony-Anhalt (Germany), Pomurje (Slovenia), Styria (Austria), Polaskie and Podkarpackie (both Poland) (see chapter 2) to counteract female brain-drain:

- A competition was launched to raise awareness and to honour outstanding female activities in the regions under consideration. Here in particular family-friendly enterprises, successful female entrepreneurs and particularly committed women were identified as their success stories should inspire other women.
- Awareness Raising Campaigns were designed and developed with regard to the internal and external perception of the individual regions and their particular challenges. Young, well-educated women were the main target group of the campaigns with a strong focus on the regional career opportunities of young people.
- A demography coaching was developed to raise awareness for the challenges of demographic change and the needs of female employees with regard to the personnel policy of regional businesses. Here raising awareness for the significance of female manpower was an important task.
- A network for business women and skilled female employees was implemented. The main intention in this context was on the one hand to improve the career opportunities of women and on the other hand to foster the ties of the participants to the region.

The volume at hand is intended to present the key results of the project including an overview on the particular socio-economic framework conditions in the partner regions (chapter 2), an overview of the demographic development (chapter 3) and the migration pattern in Europe (chapter 4) as well as the view of regional experts on the phenomenon of female migration (chapter 5). Answers to the questions of how the WOMEN Pilot Actions were implemented in the partner regions and how those activities have been able to contribute to the living situation of young women including the lessons learnt from the project activities is presented in chapter 6. In chapter 7 an outlook on the transferability of the results to other regional and social contexts in Europe is given.

2 European Territories Affected by Selective Migration: Socio-Economic Structures and the Labour Market for Women in the Study Regions¹ (*Rick Glöckner, Tim Leibert & Karin Wiest*)

Regions affected by the out-migration of young women differ significantly in their resource endowment, geographical and demographical characteristics, historical and cultural contexts and social and economic structures. Numerous studies have shown differing development paths between different rural areas with regard to economic and social structure as well as remoteness and accessibility concerning population development and migratory movements (JOHANSSON & KUPSZEWski 2009). Taking that into account the investigation of rural migration among young people and especially young women requires more disaggregated and sophisticated delimitations than the rough aggregate 'rural'. Against this backdrop the following chapter is first of all intended to characterise and introduce the six studied regions with regard to their location, their current demographic and economic development.

With respect to the subject of the project WOMEN a particular focus of this chapter is on the female employment situation. One important indicator in this respect is the female labour force participation characterised in the European context to highlight considerable differences which can be explained by national cultures and policies. In order to illustrate the economic development in the WOMEN partner regions within their national contexts each of the following case study descriptions is accompanied by a map with unemployment as one labour market indicator. The map divides the regional labour markets into different categories depending on their development of unemployment. Therefore unemployment rates of two years relative to the national mean have been compared to identify the direction of development. The following table provides a short overview on what hides behind the particular labels indicated in the individual maps (table 2).

Table 2: Typology of regional unemployment development based on unemployment rates relative to the national average

Type		Unemployment rate relative to the national mean	
		2004	2011
A	Positive continuity	below average	below average
B	Slowdown	below average	average
C	Strongly deteriorating	below average	above average
D	Upturn	average	below average
E	"Midfield"	average	average
F	Deteriorating	average	above average
G	Strongly improving	above average	below average
H	Improving	above average	average
I	Negative continuity	above average	above average

Source: WOMEN project

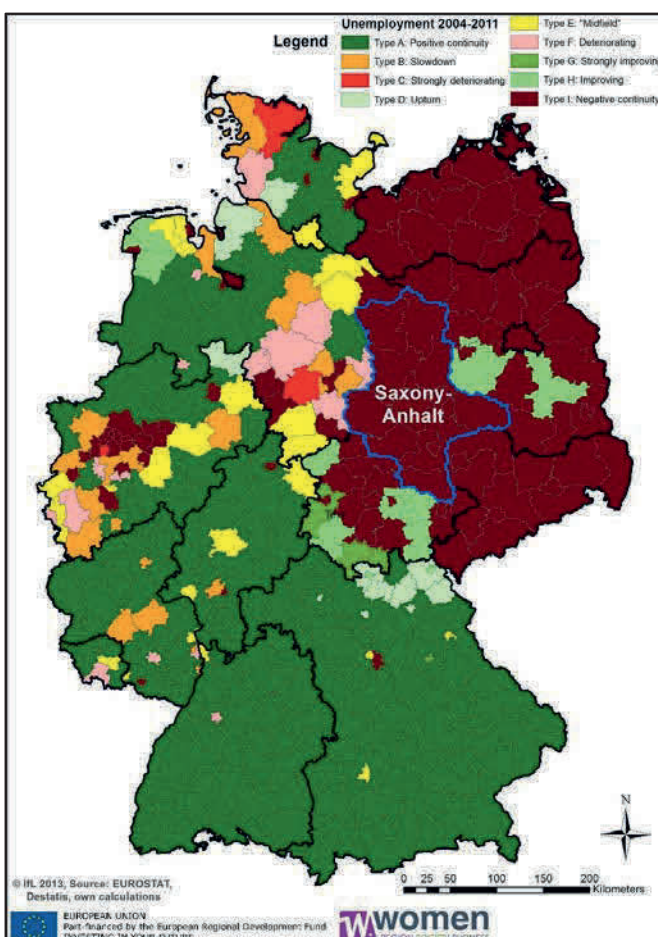
¹ Unless otherwise specified, the data presented in this chapter refer to EUROSTAT.

2.1 State of Saxony-Anhalt, Germany: A Shrinking Region in the Middle of Europe

Saxony-Anhalt is one of the five new Federal States in Eastern Germany. The largest cities are Halle (Saale) (231,500) and Magdeburg, the state capital with 231,000 inhabitants (2013). Since the German reunification the state has been strongly affected by the consequences of out-migration, aging and depopulation. Young people, especially young women, are disproportionately overrepresented among the out-migrants. Especially the rural and old industrialised parts of Saxony-Anhalt are affected by a pronounced, long-lasting depopulation, ageing and imbalanced sex ratio. There are less than 80 females per 100 males in the age-group of 18-35 in many rural municipalities (LEIBERT 2013).

In the GDR the southern part of the region, the former Bezirk Halle, was an important location of the chemical (around Bitterfeld and Merseburg) and heavy industries (around Lutherstadt

Map 1: Development of unemployment in Saxony-Anhalt



Eisleben and Sangerhausen and in the Geisel valley). The northern part of Saxony-Anhalt, the former Bezirk Magdeburg, was mostly industrial and agricultural. Massive job losses both in the primary and secondary sector, caused by the transformation from a planned to market economy could not be counterbalanced by new jobs created in other economic sectors. The unemployment rate is well above the German average but has been decreasing almost steadily over the last decade from 20.2 % (2000) to 11.2 % (2013). This decrease is part of a general favourable development trend on the German labour market. Even the unemployment rate has also declined in Saxony-Anhalt a fundamental reversal of the trend towards more dynamic labour markets has not become apparent, yet. Among women the same trend has been visible. The high unemployment rate of women which was due to a very high female labour force participation rate decreased from 22.8 % to 10.9 % showing

a convergence towards the average value for Saxony-Anhalt. Youth unemployment is an important social and economic issue. Among the 15-24 year olds the unemployment rate was notably higher than the German average with 10.2 % in 2013. At the same time first effects of a shortage of skilled labour are becoming apparent. One indication of an upcoming skills shortage is the much improved situation on the once tight market for apprenticeship positions (BURDACK

2007, BODE & BURDACK 2013). The difficult economic situation, wage differences especially between eastern and western German regions as well as unattractive conditions on the female labour market are supposed to be important factors when explaining the out-migration of young women from Saxony-Anhalt. The peripheral rural areas are increasingly affected by a downward spiral of deindustrialisation, job losses, out-migration and falling demand for goods and services. At a progressing rate, this vicious circle also negatively influences small and medium-sized towns in Saxony-Anhalt (LEIBERT 2013).

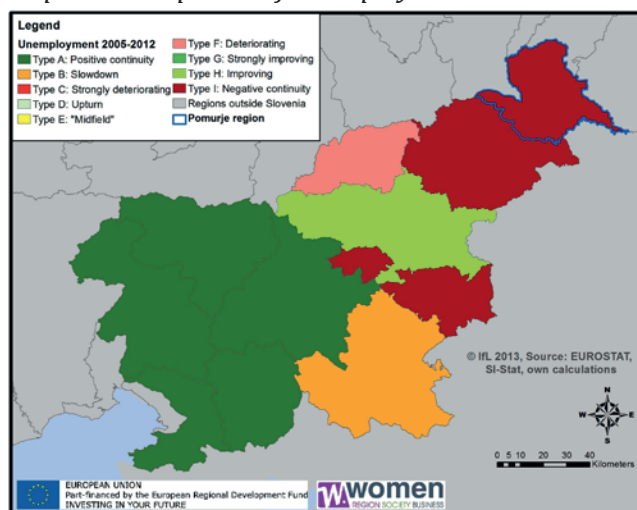
Employment among women is highly accepted and rooted in the former GDR society. Against this backdrop, Saxony-Anhalt is characterised by relatively egalitarian labour markets. The employment rate of women is high, especially compared to Western Germany and the gender gap and the percentage of women working in part-time jobs is relatively low (LEIBERT 2014). Many women who work part-time do so due to a lack of choices and would prefer full-time employment. On the one hand the demographic change with the closure of schools and kindergartens narrows job offers in women-dominated sectors of the economy, e.g. in the social and educational sector. The unfavourable population development results in decreasing demand for local services which are important employers for women in rural areas. The depopulation trend in connection with the austerity policies pursued by the state government has also resulted in a sharp reduction of the number of districts and municipalities in Saxony-Anhalt. This has further reduced the job opportunities of rural women since the public sector is an important employer especially for highly skilled women. On the other hand a shortage in some fields of the labour market, like the health care sector becomes apparent due to the ageing process.

2.2 Pomurje Statistical Region, Slovenia: Unfavourable Accessibility in a Cross-Border Triangle

The region Pomurje is located in the North-East of Slovenia (approx. 120,000 inhabitants, 90°inh./km²). It is influenced by its close relations to the neighbouring countries Hungary, Austria and Croatia. The largest town is Murska Sobota with 12,000 inhabitants which is also the economic and cultural centre of the region. Pomurje is considered to be the least developed region in Slovenia which is partly due to an isolated geographical position and poor transport connections. The region is characterised by a negative continuity on the labour market (see map 2): the regional unemployment rate has been the highest in Slovenia for years with 17.1% in 2005 and 18.0 % in 2011 (STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA 2013). The agriculturally aligned regional economy produces a low GDP reaching only 70 % of the national average (STA SLOVENIAN PRESS AGENCY 2012). In this context it is affected by nationwide increasing unemployment among people with a higher education (Slovenia: from 5.3 % in 2000 to 8.8 % in 2009) (EEO 2011). The unemployment for women is significantly higher than the average value (e.g. 8.4 % women to 4.8 % men in 2008). Also the wages are far below the national mean. Generally, the employment possibilities are restricted – not only for university graduates, but especially for well-educated women. The regional economy is traditionally focused on the processing industry, especially textiles, metal and food. The deindustrialisation process and the decline of big employers like the flag ship enterprise ‘Mura’ have caused rising

unemployment rates. Notably the textile industry is strongly affected which is at the same time still an important regional employer representing ca. 25 % of the regional work force (SPIRIT SLOVENIA 2011). Further important economic sectors are the service sector with 27.5 % and the building industry with 8 %. A further peculiarity of the societal composition is the Hungarian and Roma minority living mainly in the eastern parts of the region and demonstrating the multicultural character of Pomurje.

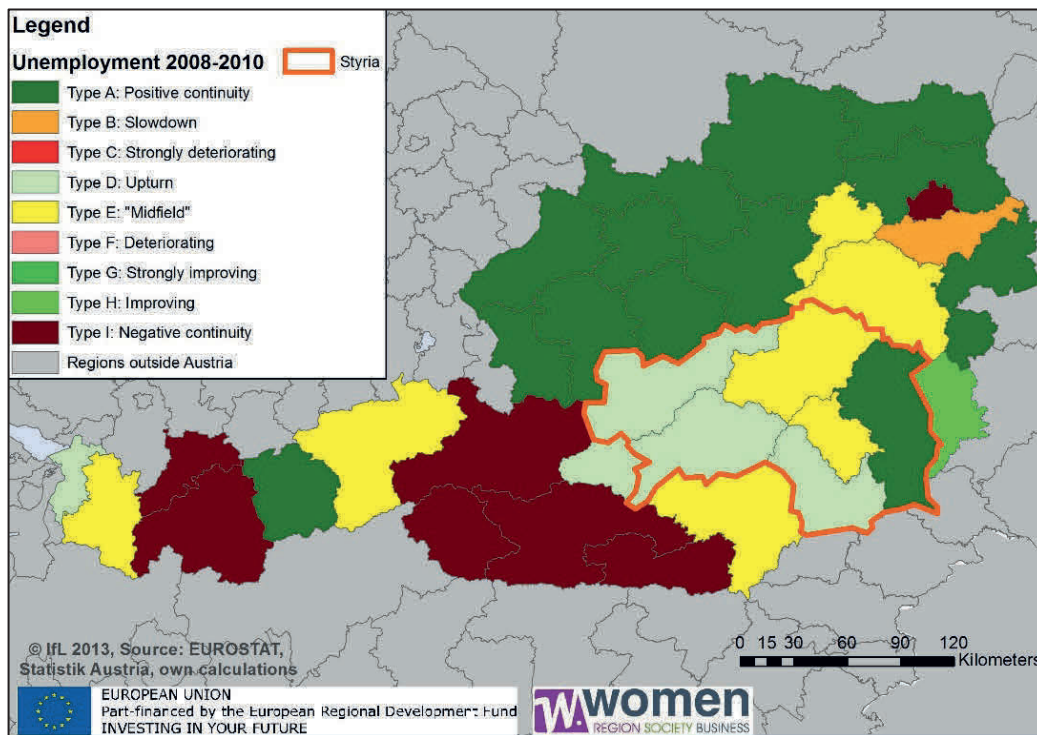
Map 2: Development of unemployment in Slovenia



2.3 State of Styria, Austria: The Emergence of a New Rurality?

Styria is the second biggest state of Austria. To the south it shares a 145 km-long border with Slovenia. The federal state is characterised by a slight population increase of 2.6 % in the period between 2000 and 2012. The city of Graz with approx. 270,000 inhabitants as point of attraction is mainly responsible for this. Conversely, especially the north-western parts of Styria are characterised by negative migration balances (see chapter 4.1). Economically, Styria has undergone a significant structural change from a mainly agriculturally characterised economy towards an economy more focused on diversified industries and services. But still, the shares of employees in the services and industrial sectors are below the national average while the agricultural sector shows a significantly higher share, 8.1 % in Styria compared to 5.3 % in whole Austria (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2013). Until the end of the 1980s the iron and steel as well as the automotive industry were the dominant economic sectors. Only the automotive supply industry has fully recovered and gained international visibility. Despite the mentioned structural change, the region is still characterised by a rather high concentration of primary industries and a structurally weak periphery (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2013). With an unemployment rate of 3.3 % according to the ILO calculation method respectively 8.1 % in 2013 according to Austrian calculation (AMS ÖSTERREICH 2013) Styria nearly equals the Austrian average. The unemployment trends in Styria are, however, more favourable than in the other case-study regions. The unemployment rate decreased to below-average levels between 2008 and 2010 in the western parts of the state and stabilised at an average or low level in the rest of Styria (see map 3). The unemployment rate for women ranged around the mean unemployment rate in the last decade (3.2 % for women compared to 3.3 % in 2011).

Map 3: Development of unemployment in Austria



2.4 Podlaskie Voivodeship, Poland: An Agricultural Border Region

The Podlaskie Voivodeship is located in the North-East of Poland covering ca. 20,000 km² and is inhabited by ca. 1.2 million people. The region is very sparsely populated. The population density is nearly half of the Polish average, due to a low level of urbanisation (KONDRATIUK-NIERODZIŃSKA 2007). To the East it borders Lithuania and Belarus. Over the last decade the population has slightly decreased. After a minimum in 2010 the population started to grow again caused by in-migration and surpluses of births in the eastern region around the voivodeship's central city Białystok (295,000 inhabitants). The economy is highly characterised by agriculture and a low level of industrialisation and relies on food processing, light industry, wood industry and the machine production (PODLASKIE VOIVODESHIP MARSHAL'S OFFICE 2011). It produces a very low GDP compared to Polish and EU averages. The regional labour market is characterised by increasing unemployment rates. The situation on the labour market worsened between 2004 and 2011 in the whole region, but especially in Białystok and its hinterland (see map 4). In 2011 Podlaskie showed an unemployment rate of 9.3 % and also a high rate of youth unemployment (24.8 %), especially among young women (27.8 %)². A specific problem of both Polish partner regions is the location on the external border of the EU. The western border regions are among the economically weakest areas of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The external border of the EU hence separates the poorest regions of both the member and the non-member states (ILLÉS 2010). Against this backdrop, the socio-economic situation of the eastern border regions is further aggravated by the external border regime of the EU which has limited trans-border traffic and trade and hence hindered the development and increased the peripherality of these already underdeveloped areas (BAŃSKI & JANICKI 2013). Against this backdrop, it is not

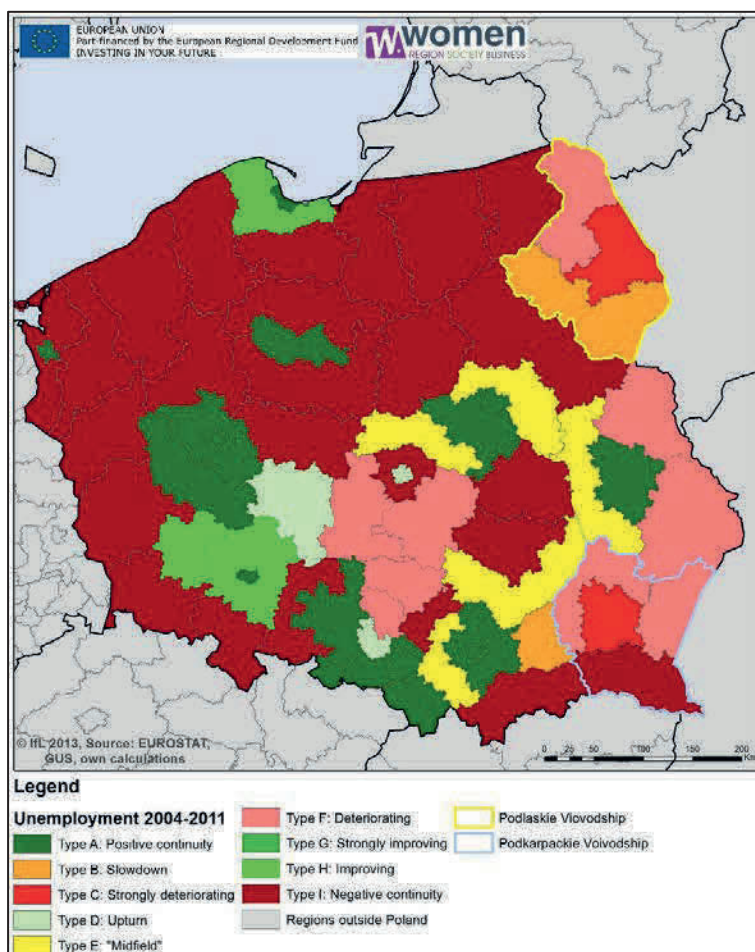
² according to the national calculation method 14.6 % (source: www.stat.gov.pl, last accessed: 13.06.2013)

surprising that the global financial crisis has only marginally affected the labour markets of the peripheral und underdeveloped agricultural rural regions in Eastern Poland (GORZELAK 2010). These regions are, according to GORZELAK (2010: 146) so “*poorly connected with the external world [that] any impulses from the outside [...] do not change their endogenous situation much*”.

2.5 Podkarpackie Voivodeship, Poland: Between Dynamics and Underdevelopment

The region Podkarpackie is located in South-Eastern Poland and borders Slovakia and Ukraine. Traditionally, the rural character of the voivodeship is in contrast with the development of its larger cities. Podkarpackie is basically an agricultural and industrial region. This is reflected by a comparatively low urbanisation level. Recently the aviation industry is the most noticeable element of the regional economy. The main capital and the economic and cultural centre is the city of Rzeszów with more than 180,000 inhabitants. The airport and university foster the

Map 4: Development of unemployment in Poland



significance of this regional hub. Podkarpackie as a whole is often considered as the least developed voivodeship in Poland with a low GDP/capita and a high unemployment rate. Even though the GDP production per capita is growing year by year, Podkarpackie ranks last compared to the other Polish voivodeships.³ In 2011 the unemployment rate of about 12.6 % was significantly higher than the national average (9.6 %) and had been increasing since 2008 (8.2 %).⁴ The labour market trends were unfavourable in all parts of the regions between 2004 and 2011. As in Podlaskie, the rise in the unemployment rate was highest in the regional capital and its hinterland. The sub-regions of Rzeszów and Białystok belong to the most problematic category in our labour market typology: regions that have

undergone a transformation from below-average to above-average unemployment rates (see map 4). Women's unemployment rates are following this trend and have remained constantly

³ 2005-2010, www.stat.gov.pl (last accessed: 13.06.2013)

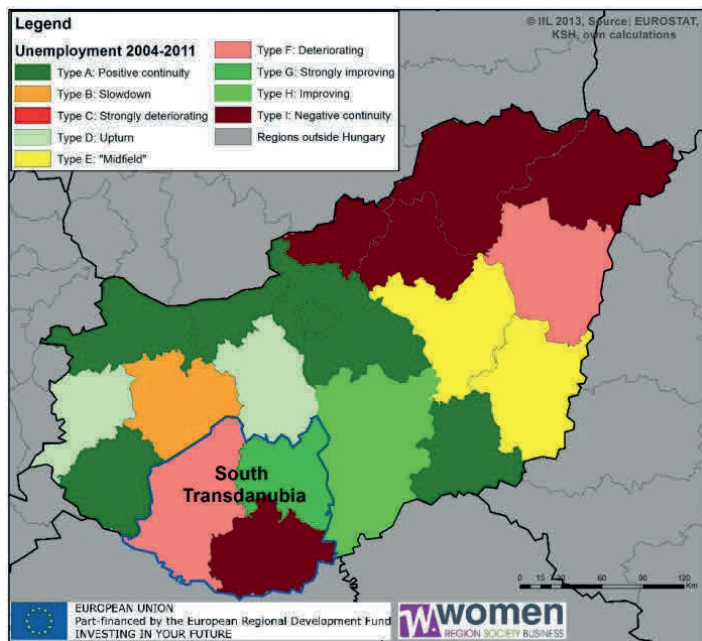
⁴ according to the Polish calculation the unemployment rate in 2011 was 16.3 % (source: www.stat.gov.pl, last accessed: 13.06.2013)

approx. 1 % higher than the Polish average since 2008. Podkarpackie is characterised by a slightly increasing population which grew by about 1.5 % from 2008 until 2011 due to surpluses of births and in-migration in some of the voivodeship's powiats (Eurostat). This equals an increase of about 31,000 people. Furthermore, the population is comparably young (EURES 2013).

2.6 Southern Transdanubia, Hungary: Structural Changes and Decline

South-Transdanubia is a NUTS-2 region which consists of the three counties Baranya, Somogy and Tolna in South-Western Hungary sharing its southern border with Croatia. It also is bordered by the Danube and Drava rivers as well as Lake Balaton. It has a population of about 933,000 inhabitants which has been severely decreasing over the last decade due to a surplus of deaths and out-migration processes. There are some islands of growth in this sea of demographic decline; many of them are, however what KERESÉ (2010: 13) calls '*pseudo winners*': Small villages with a youthful age structure and a high ratio of Roma inhabitants which are in danger of becoming rural ghettos on the periphery of Hungarian society. The region is the most sparsely populated area in Hungary (66.1 inhabitants/km²) and is characterised by an unfavourable settlement structure, with an underdeveloped urban network, on the one hand, and the dominance of micro- and small settlements, on the other. The main centres are the counties' capitals Pécs, Kaposvár and Szekszárd. Pécs is the main economic and cultural centre of the region with approx. 157,000 inhabitants. South-Transdanubia is an underdeveloped and declining region with a shrinking contribution to Hungary's GDP from 7.4 % (2000) to 6.5 % in

Map 5: Development of Unemployment in Southern Transdanubia



2008 (SZALAVETZ 2011). The economy has undergone a significant structural change with a huge cutback in the mining and industrial sector while the services sector has grown and now constitutes a strong position within the regional economy (THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY 2006). Although constantly declining, the agricultural sector still shows a high proportion in the economy (only outranked by the Southern Great Plain region) (LIESZKOVSZKY 2012). Too few new enterprises and a lack of dynamic economic development have led to constantly growing unemployment rates since 2004 (6.9 % to 12.7 % in 2011) which are constantly at least 1 % higher than the national mean value (10.9 % in 2011). The labour market situation is especially problematic in Baranya County which was characterised by a negative continuity between 2004 and 2011 and Somogy where the regional unemployment rate has risen more sharply than the national one. The increase in

unemployment has only been below the Hungarian average in Tolna county (see map 5). The labour market situation is especially problematic in remote small settlements where the local labour market is very tight and commuting to the regional employment centres is almost impossible due to high travel costs and poor transport connections (KERESZTES & VÁMOSI 2008). Women's unemployment rates have also been constantly higher than the national averages (13% to 11% in 2011) but have showed no permanent trend in comparison with the general unemployment rate in South Transdanubia. The region is characterised by a deeply rooted male breadwinner model and significant discrimination against women on the labour market: the female labour force participation is very low by European standards while the gender gap is very wide (LEIBERT 2014, map 6a, b). This pattern makes South Transdanubia the case study region with the least women-friendly labour markets. This pattern is based on very traditional gender roles. JELENSZKYNÉ FÁBIÁN (2009: 3) points out that *“one of the most important obstacles of women's public activity is the traditional ‘female roles’ attitude of society which defines the organisation of the home life, conducting of the household and raising children as the females' central job”*.

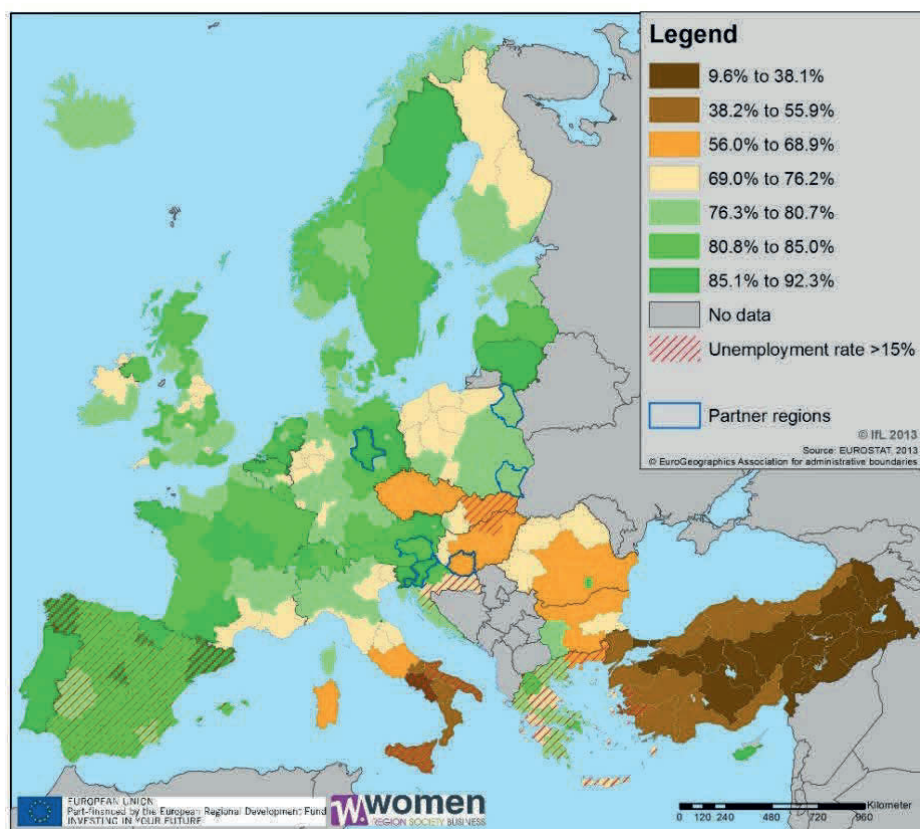
2.7 Different Challenges Related to Female Labour Market Structures within Europe

Considering the labour market participation of young women in Europe there are considerable differences between many parts of Southern and Eastern Europe and the Northern and Western member states. When trying to explain those differences gender role models seem to be an important determining factor. Basically, societal ‘male breadwinner and female caregiver models’ are related to low female labour force participation. Therefore gender role models are an important determining factor related to varying labour market structures across Europe. Those patterns can also be found in the case study regions of the WOMEN project. The analysis showed that the economic structure and the labour market structures of the regions under consideration are quite diverse, which proved to be challenging for the implementation of the Pilot Actions of the WOMEN project. The labour force participation of women is high and accepted in some case study regions (e.g. Saxony-Anhalt) whereas other regions (e.g. South Transdanubia) are characterised by very traditional gender relations which hamper the labour force participation of women (see map 6a). The labour force participation rate, i.e. the percentage of women of a given age that is economically active (employed or actively looking for work) can be interpreted as an indicator for the economic opportunities of young women. A strong gender gap, i.e. a situation in which the labour force participation rates of women (low) and men (high) diverge can be considered an indicator for deeply-rooted traditional gender role models in a region, but also for a ‘male-oriented’ industry structure.

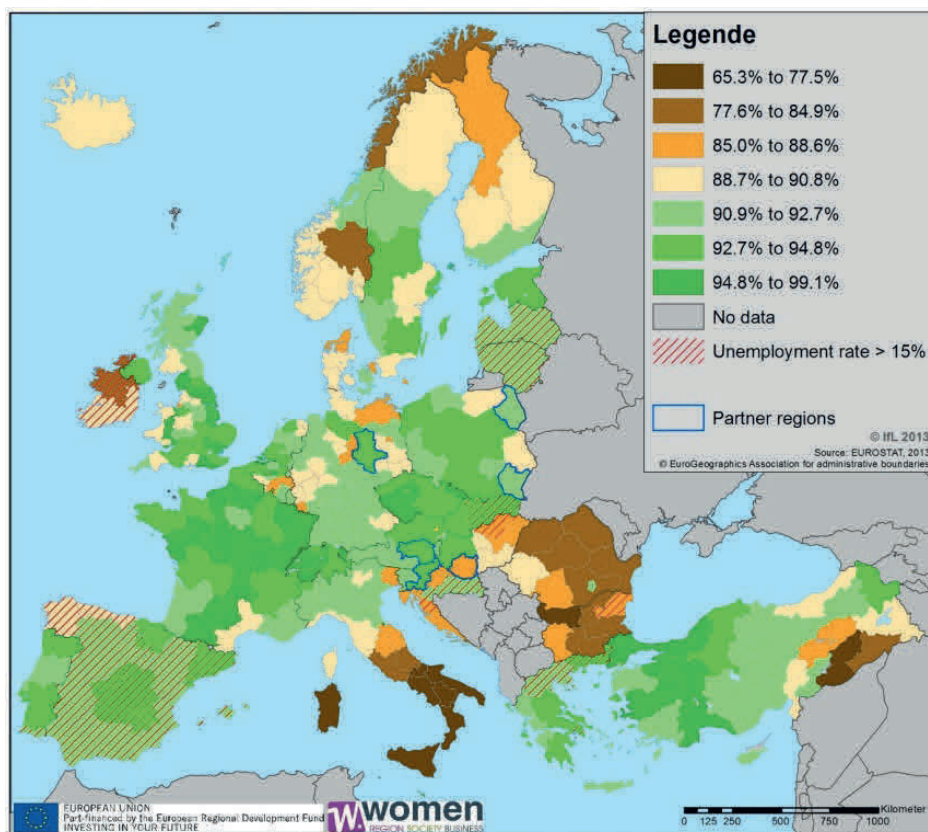
While map 6a depicts the labour force participation rate of women, map 6b shows that of coeval men between 25 and 34 at the NUTS2 level. It becomes clear that there are pronounced intra- as well as interstate differences in the economic activity rates of both men and women. There are regions where the male labour force participation rate is high, while the female labour force participation rate is very low in European comparison. Examples are the Czech Republic and Slovakia. There are also regions with a very high share of gainfully employed women and a

relatively low male labour force participation rate, e.g. Saxony-Anhalt. There are several possible explanations for the large differences in the labour force participation rates of women. A low share of women working or actively looking for work can be a result of a weak regional economy. In this case, the male labour force participation rate will also be low (this is the case in South Transdanubia). The female labour force participation rate in the age group 25 to 34 may also be the result of high regional fertility; in this case, a significant proportion of the female population would be inactive because they are on parental leave (this is not the case in any of the WOMEN case study regions). There is also a cultural explanation. A low female labour force participation rate can be an indicator that traditional gender roles (male breadwinner and female caregiver) are still deeply rooted in the society of a given country or region. At the national level, there are pronounced differences with respect to the evaluation of female labour force participation. People in (Western) Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia are more likely to think that women should retreat from the labour market in times of crisis and leave their jobs to men and that women should only work if their job does not interfere with their family obligations and that they adjust their professional career to the needs of their family (ESPON & IFL 2012: 33). Against this backdrop, it can be concluded that there are several challenges for the WOMEN project operant at different levels: In some regions, reservations against the labour force participation of women and especially mothers are deeply rooted which may lead to the out-migration of career-oriented women and a loss of human capital if qualified women leave the labour market for good after having their first child. Male-oriented and/or tight labour markets limit the occupational and career opportunities of women irrespective of the degree of cultural acceptability of female labour force participation rate in the regions. The compatibility of family and career is another aspect as well as challenges related to rurality, i.e. long commutes, poor accessibility, deficient infrastructures which are especially relevant for women (NOACK 2011).

Map 6a: Female labour force participation in the age group 25-34 years 2013



Map 6b: Male labour force participation in the age group 25-34 years 2013



Source: WOMEN project (level: NUTS 2)

3 Selective Migration and Brain-Drain in Rural Regions: Patterns and Explanations (*Tim Leibert*)

When people think about the countryside, they often connect rurality with stability, rootedness, attachment to place and localism. In short, the stable rural is imagined as the antithesis of the hypermobile urban (MILBOURNE & KITCHEN 2014). Many rural regions are, however, intensely affected by mobility: the out-migration of the young, the in-migration of retirement migrants, the ‘passage migration’ of tourists or long-distance labour mobility of weekend commuters to name just a few examples. Even sedentariness is not equivalent to stability and immobility. WALSH (2012) argues that “*rural communities are mobile communities*” (2012: 137) and that mobility is increasingly used as a means to gain stability and to be able to stay in rural regions with a difficult job market or in regions in which the withdrawal of the state and the market enhances the necessity to be mobile and to travel long distances to satisfy their basic needs. Migration, as well as mobility in general⁵, is in most cases selective. The probability of changing residence differs – among others – by age, sex and education. Young, highly skilled people, and especially young, highly skilled women are most likely to move to more urbanised regions. The consequences of the selectivity of migration for rural regions are ambiguous. MILBOURNE & KITCHEN (2014: 335) nicely sum up this rural mobility paradox: “*on the one hand, [rural places] require mobilities to remain sustainable [...] while, on the other these same mobilities have the power to destroy the essence of the place*”.

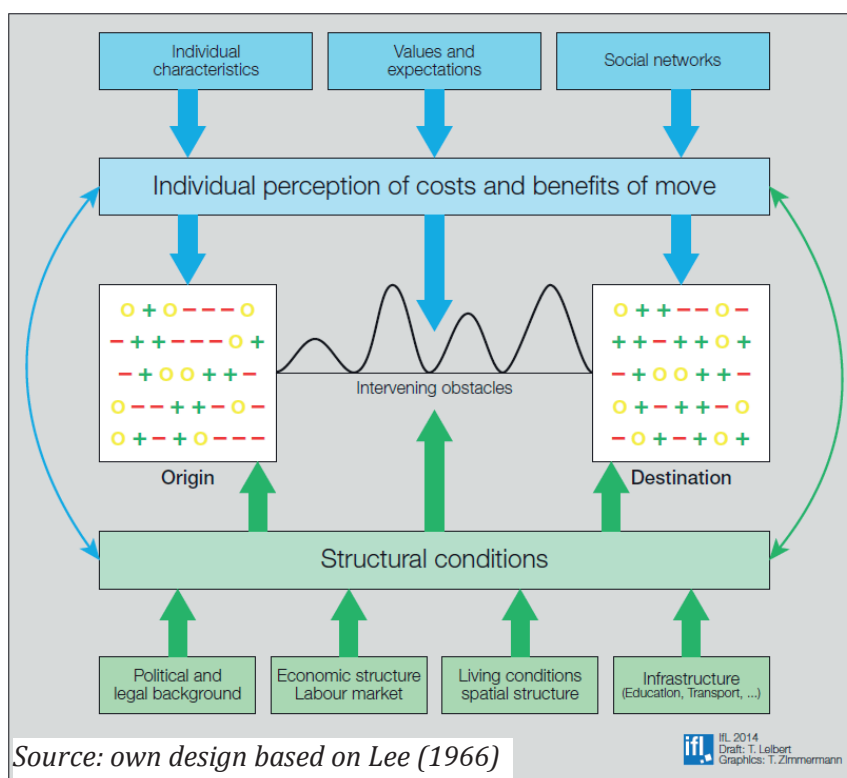
Selective migration hence has, on the one hand, a devastating effect on rural communities as it leaves behind an older, less educated and less skilled population. Selective migration can lead to the impoverishment of rural regions and contribute to a sense of instability and a loss of identity (FOULKES & NEWBOLD 2008). The out-migration of young people also undermines the viability and sustainability of rural areas because it entails the loss of future community leaders, business owners and entrepreneurs. The reasons behind the brain-drain are missing access to higher education, the desire to escape the small town milieu and the lack of employment opportunities which is caused by changes in agriculture, deindustrialisation and the withdrawal of public and private services (ALSTON 2004, EVERSOLE 2001). Out-migration and economic restructuring can lead to a self-reinforcing vicious circle of depopulation, service cuts and a disintegration of the local civil society (WEBER & FISCHER 2010, see also figure 1 in chapter 1).

The out-migration of young people is, on the other hand, not only a problem, but also an opportunity for rural communities because the spatial mobility of young people is also a prerequisite for economic regeneration. Since the availability of appropriate human capital is a crucial aspect of endogenous regional development, the out-migration of young adults to acquire the skills and knowledge for participating in the economic regeneration of rural regions is in fact a necessity. A problem only arises if too few young people return at a later stage of the life circle to use their human capital regionally. Return- and in-migration can bring new enthusiasm and rejuvenation to depopulating rural regions (STOCKDALE 2006). Some young people actually pursue a strategy that WRIGHT (2012) calls “*becoming to remain*” in order to contribute to an

⁵ See e.g. NOACK (2011) who discusses the gendered nature of daily mobility in rural Scotland.

advancement of the local economies and/or to become agents of change in their home-region. In this sense, discouraging school leavers to leave to get an education and to improve their human capital would eventually be detrimental to rural areas; policy makers should instead focus on creating the conditions that their regions become or remain attractive places with a high quality of life to encourage in- or return migration (STOCKDALE 2006). This also includes providing opportunities for post-secondary education in rural regions (WRIGHT 2012). Maintaining a decentralised network of institutions of higher education with close ties to the local and regional economies and societies is hence an important strategy to ensure the endogenous development of rural regions. However, many rural adolescents have embodied that “*all of the pathways to success that are understood to be strategic and/or successful are premised on pathways that lead [them] out of their rural homes and communities*” (LOOKER & NAYLOR 2009: 54) long before leaving school. Likewise, many parents in declining rural communities believe that the brain-drain is unpreventable and that leaving is the only suitable path to economic success for their children. In this sense, measures against the brain-drain also require an analysis of the social dynamics that underlie families’ experiences in rural schools and communities (SHERMAN & SAGE 2011).

Figure 2: Explanatory model of the migration process



The basic question is, however: why do people move? Moving costs time, money and nerves, often involves a rupture of social networks and brings about the need to re-organise daily activities. People will, against this backdrop, only consider migration if they negatively evaluate the situation at their present location (negative push-factors) and are convinced that moving would significantly improve their situation (positive pull-factors). However, spatial mobility will only occur if the social and

financial costs of moving are lower than the expected monetary and non-monetary gains and if other ‘intervening obstacles’ (e.g. financial constraints) on the way between the present and desired place of residence can be overcome (LEE 1966).

The assessment of the situation at origin and destination as well as the expected difficulties to overcome the ‘intervening obstacles’ are influenced by structural conditions and individual aspects such as values, expectations, gender role attitudes, and so on (figure 2). The decision to

migrate also has a subjective dimension. Limited knowledge of the labour market situation and the housing market at destination and personal preferences (e.g. living close to relatives, preference for a certain type of housing or a specific residential environment) may lead to economically sub-optimal migration behaviour. MÜNTER (2013), for instance, showed that information and perception gaps during the decision-making process explain why some households reach decisions concerning their new residential location which contradict their original objectives.

Additionally, it has to be taken into consideration that social networks influence the decision to migrate. Living together with a partner, having children or caring for elderly relatives tend to lower the propensity to migrate (BAILEY et. al. 2004). Structural and economic push- and pull-factors are important explanations of migration streams, but they are experienced by individuals in the context of culture, community, and family. Under similar socio-economic circumstances, some young women and men may opt to stay while others decide to leave (CORBETT 2005). Social networks, notably the presence of family and close friends, are a powerful motive to come back to less popular rural regions (BIJKER et al. 2012) and hence an important explanation for return migration. Family ties, social networks and the employment situation are, however, reciprocally intertwined:

“Decisions to act on family-motivated desires to return [are] either enhanced or diminished by evaluations of the broader social and physical environment. [...] The ability to move back to a rural place [also hinges] on securing employment” (VON REICHERT et al. 2014: 69).

Other aspects operant at the individual level that may influence migration decisions are social class-affiliation, as well as the amount of individual cultural, economic and social capital (RYE 2006a, 2006b, RYE & BLEKESAUNE 2007). An important explanation of why people stay is place attachment. MILBOURNE & KITCHEN (2014) argue that place attachment makes the downsides of rural life, e.g. the increasingly difficult logistics of organising one's daily life against the background of the increasing withdrawal of local services, acceptable for many rural residents. However, a strong place attachment is not sufficient. BARCUS & BRUNN (2010) argue that mobility and place attachment are not necessarily mutually exclusive and that migration should not automatically be equated with a lack or loss of place attachment. Some people are able maintain a strong attachment to a specific place without living there. They develop strategies to make their ties 'portable' so that they can *“take their place attachments with them when they travel, migrate or retire”* (BARCUS & BRUNN 2010: 291).

3.1 Why do Young Women Move to Urban Areas?

WIBORG (2004: 418) argues that *“the same place may have different meanings for men and women because places are in various ways associated with gender and regulate men's and women's behaviour differently”*. Against this backdrop, it is necessary to take gender into account both as an independent determinant of migration and a lens through which the (dis-)advantages of rural living are perceived and evaluated. For the development of strategies to deal with (the

consequences of) youth out-migration from rural areas, this means that it is necessary not only to focus strategies on young people in general, but specifically on young women.

In literature, several alternative hypotheses are discussed of why urban regions are especially attractive for well-educated young women that go beyond employment- and education-focused explanations. In the following section, we focus on three theses that have been discussed in recent papers: (1) rural areas are male-dominated and offer women little leeway to deviate from traditional gender roles; (2) urban areas are more attractive marriage markets than rural regions and (3) formal education causes young women to leave.

Rural out-migration may be motivated by the quest for the increased personal freedom urban life-styles offer and the dissatisfaction with social control and the absent or hesitant economic and social progress in rural areas (RICO GONZÁLEZ & GÓMEZ GARCÍA 2003). The image of rural regions is frequently connected to patriarchal gender relations and rather traditional images of femininity. Young women who refuse to perceive themselves as good wives and caring mothers tend to vote with their feet and use migration as a liberating exit-strategy to leave an oppressive environment (WIBORG 2004). Rural life and rural societies in themselves may also be more attractive for boys and young men. Since rural areas offer better leisure opportunities for young men (KLOEP et al. 2003) and young women are more affected by gossip and informal social control (HAUGEN & VILLA 2006), living in rural regions may be more satisfying for young men which may in turn explain the lower proportion of migrants in this group. Young women, on the other hand, frequently feel constrained by the close-knit rural communities and value the privacy they enjoy in urban areas (VON REICHERT et al. 2014).

Young rural women have less leeway than their urban contemporaries to challenge the traditional gender roles (HAUGEN & VILLA 2006). JONES (1999: 19) argues that *“there is a tendency for ‘dissenters’ to leave and ‘conformists’ to remain”*. For DAHLSTRÖM the strong patriarchal structures embedded in rural areas are an important explanation for sex-selective out-migration: *“Perhaps women are not just attracted by the opportunities in urban areas but pushed out from a male rural area in which there is little place for them culturally or concerning work opportunities”* (1996: 262). A rural area becomes ‘male’ because the local power relations, dominant values and norms, and activities are determined or dominated by men, while female activities are less visible and valued. DAHLSTRÖM notices an increasing cultural gap between modern women and more traditional men which may eventually lead to a situation in which *“the young men may be left behind as losers [and] become marginalized”* (1996: 270). However, it seems that the perception of rural regions as places with a gender order in which women are subordinate to men both in economic and social life may be increasingly less justifiable. FORSBERG & STENBACKA (2013) even see signs of an emergence of ‘new femininity’ and ‘new masculinity’ in rural regions which is connected to the increasing labour force participation of rural women and the transformation of rural areas into the residential and family-oriented ‘consumption countryside’.

According to EDLUND (2005), the ‘surplus’ of women in their twenties in cities can be explained by a combination of marriage and labour market factors. She argues that urban labour markets

offer both skilled women and men better-paid jobs. Consequently, cities would offer women better jobs as well as better marriage opportunities since high-earning men are also concentrated in urban areas. In her analysis based on Swedish data, EDLUND (ibid.) finds that a higher male income in a municipality is associated with a higher sex ratio. Municipalities with a surplus of men, on the other hand, are not only characterised by a low level of income of the resident male population, but also by a high proportion of women that have never been married. Hence, one can argue that young men in regions with a low sex ratio are not only more likely to be economically deprived; they are also faced with lower prospects of finding a partner. This argument is in line with research results suggesting young men with low human capital are increasingly faced with a poor labour-market position at the beginning of their professional life due to industrial restructuring, rising economic inequality, and growing occupational insecurity making it more difficult for them to enter a cohabiting or marital union (OPPENHEIMER 2003, OPPENHEIMER et al. 1997). KRÖHNERT (2009) suggests that the 'mismatch' between the high percentage of female school-leavers with upper secondary certificates and the above-average proportion of male early school leavers in Eastern Germany is an important explanation for the strong out-migration of young women and their low likelihood of returning after leaving. He finds that female migrants to Western Germany are more likely to enter a relationship than young men which – as a consequence – significantly reduces the odds of them coming back to Eastern Germany after they have finished their education or professional training. KRÖHNERT & VOLLMER (2012) interpret the 'educational mismatch' as a legacy of the socialist era where traditionally male jobs in the secondary sector reputedly enjoyed a high social prestige. Against this backdrop, academic achievement is said to have low priority for young men.

Some authors hold the education system responsible for the general out-migration of young people from rural regions and of young women in particular. Young women are more inclined toward training and education and tend to reach higher educational levels than rural young men. The education system is sometimes accused of *"promoting the abandonment of rural life and sacralising the values and forms of urban life"* (CAMARERO et al. 2009: 51). This would, in consequence, result in a progressive distancing and uprooting of girls and young women from rural lifestyles and the values and life expectations of rural boys and young men. CORBETT argues that *"formal education is designed for those who leave"* (2009: 1) and that *"the multiple skills and intelligences that it takes to make it in a rural community [are] largely misunderstood and dismissed within formal educational contexts"* (2009: 5). These skills are transmitted through 'informal' education systems that integrate young men into local employment and cultural traditions and practices. This localised social capital is, however, far less useful for girls because the main sources of well-paid employment are 'male' jobs in the primary and secondary sectors. Consequently, rural women need to be successful in formal education to escape the economic marginality they would face in rural regions with male-oriented labour markets; the jobs they are prepared for are, on the other hand, usually not locally available which – in turn – prompts them to leave (CORBETT 2005, 2009).

The urban preferences of young women may not be permanent but restricted to young adulthood. RYE (2006b) finds in his survey of Norwegian pupils that significantly more girls than boys express a preference for living in a city in their twenties, although there are only minor

differences in residential preferences in later stages of life. The out-migrants seem to have the intention of returning to the countryside in their thirties or when they have children. However, a return to the countryside does not necessarily imply a return to one's home region. Many migrants with rural roots prefer rural regions that are more accessible, more prosperous or economically stronger than the places where they were born. RYE's (ibid.) findings underline that the perception of rural regions and the (dis-)advantages are perceived differently in different stages of the life course. Aspects like social control and quietness may be annoying for young adults but also an important reason why young families like rural living. It seems that rural out-migrants re-evaluate the assets and drawbacks of living in the countryside after they have moved to urban regions (WIBORG 2004) and make plans to return based on this changed evaluation of their home region. Since the patterns of internal migration (and hence also the regional sex-ratio patterns) are closely correlated to the life course, we will discuss the connections between age and mobility in the next section.

3.2 Age- and Sex-Selectivity of Out-Migration from Rural Regions: A Life-Course Perspective

The ideal typical life course of young adults in industrialised countries can be characterised as follows: Young people study, learn a trade and eventually enter the labour market in the age group of 20-24, form stable partnerships, gain work experience and establish themselves in the labour market in the age group of 25-29 and settle down and start a family in the age group of 30-34. Individual life trajectories and migration biographies are of course much more diverse and less predictable and not only determined by employment and family formation. Consequently, STOCKDALE & CATNEY (2014: 95) call for a re-integration of 'geography' into life course migration studies: *"The local geography of an area, including its settlement hierarchy, its culture of migration (in terms of migration direction and decision-making), and local structures [...] need to be considered. Collectively and individually, they represent powerful influences on internal migration flows."* Beyond that, the various socio-economic, institutional and cultural contexts as well as predominating values vis-à-vis gender roles and patterns of leaving the parental home in the different countries will also influence the plans for the future and the mobility of young women and men across Europe. The reasoning below can of course not take all the potential factors listed above into account. The life course is nevertheless an important explanation for the patterns of internal migration.

The age between 20 and 24 years is the period of life in which young people finish academic or vocational training and enter the labour market – usually on temporary contracts, often as interns, trainees or in poorly paid precarious jobs. Given their higher inclination to study and the sex-segregation of labour markets into a female-dominated service sector and a male-dominated manufacturing trade, urban areas are more attractive for young women in their early twenties because universities and other institutions that offer post-secondary and tertiary education are usually located in cities. Urban areas are also characterised by more 'women-friendly' labour markets due to a more diversified industry structure. However, getting an education and entering the labour market in a specific region does not necessarily entail a long-term geographical commitment. As demonstrated by FINDLAY et al. (2009), the economic core areas

can function as ‘escalator regions’ which are particularly appealing to upwardly mobile young single in-migrants interested in quick professional advancement. A significant proportion of these women and men leave the escalator regions at an early or mid-stage of their careers to assume more senior positions elsewhere.

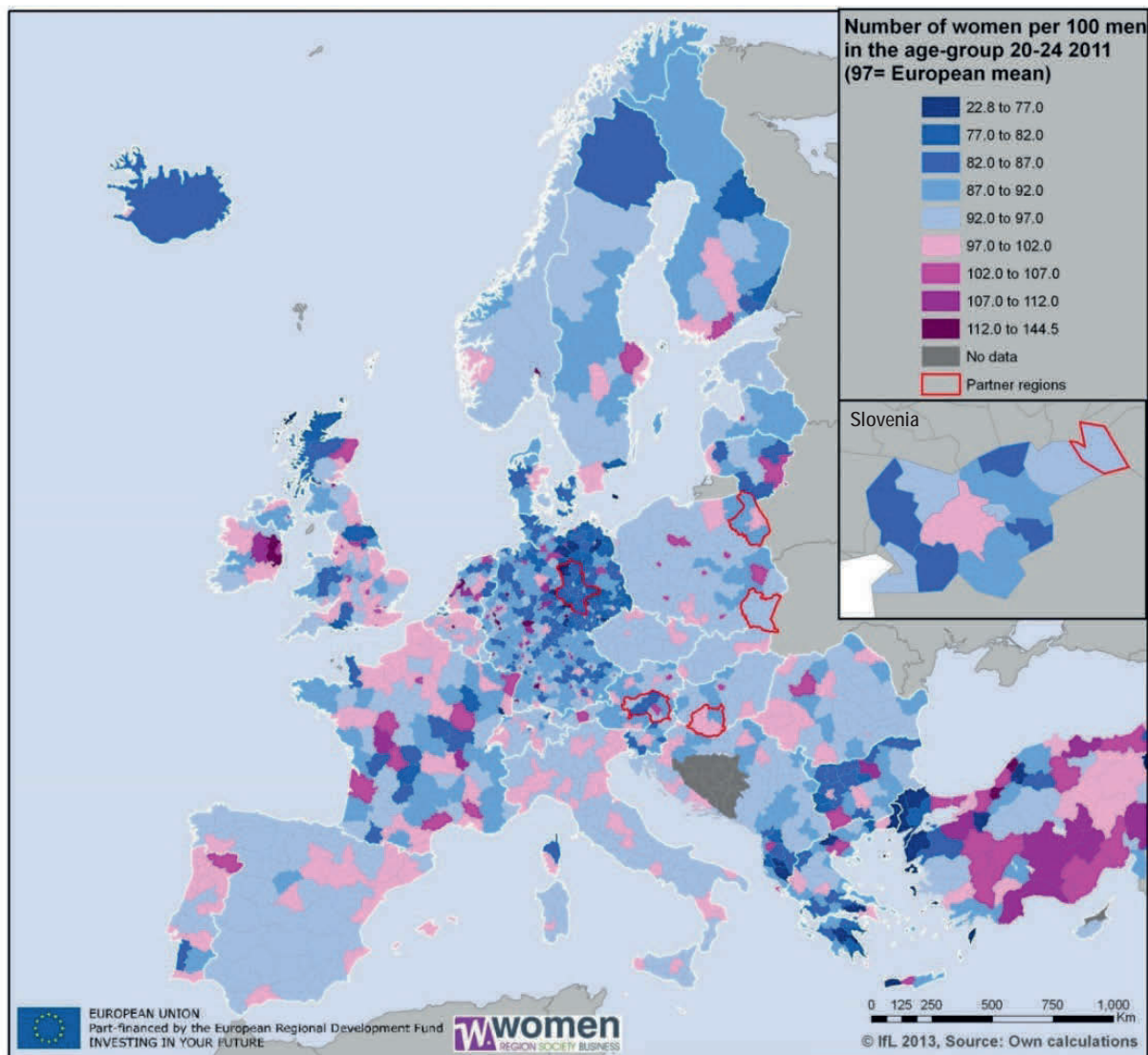
Cultural and political factors also play an important role, especially in explaining cross-national differences in the regional sex-ratio patterns. The basic pre-condition for imbalanced sex ratios is of course that young people leave the parental home. There are distinctive differences in the patterns of leaving the childhood home in Europe as BILLARI (2004) points out:

“In a time of overall social and economic convergence in European countries, it is hard to find social indicators with such striking differences among EU countries as those relating to the transition to adulthood. The differences between societies are striking, but intra-society heterogeneity is massive as well.” (2004: 17)

In Southern Europe, young people, especially young men, leave the parental home very late (‘latest-late pattern’ in BILLARI’s typology). A substantial proportion of people in their thirties still live with their parents. Young Scandinavians, on the other hand, leave their childhood home in their late teens or early twenties and rarely co-reside with their parents in their thirties (‘earliest-early pattern’). Important determinants of leaving the parental home are parents’ resources, conditions on the labour market, the availability of housing, and the welfare state. The age of leaving home is low in the social-democratic and liberal welfare states (i.e. the Nordic countries and the UK) where the welfare regime is oriented towards the individual, medium in the family-oriented conservative welfare states of Western Europe and very high in the familialistic welfare states of Southern Europe characterised by a lack of social policies and weak family policies. Another important determinant that is closely related is the strength of family ties and values and beliefs about the ‘correct’ timing and sequencing of life trajectories.

Map 7 clearly demonstrates that the regional pattern of sex-ratio imbalances in the age group of 20 to 24 mirrors the urban-rural gradient and is closely linked to the spatial distribution of higher education facilities. Most capital regions are characterised by a ‘surplus’ of females. This usually also applies to other major urban centres. Sex ratios in rural regions, on the other hand, tend to be below the European mean of 97 women per 100 men all over the continent. The ‘pink spots’ on the map are mostly regions with minor urban centres – usually university towns – or the hinterlands of the metropolises. The ‘deficit’ of women is, however, usually moderate. Regions with sex ratios below 87 (i.e. more than 10 % below the ‘natural’ mean) usually do not form a contiguous area. The major exception to this rule is Eastern Germany. A comparable spatial concentration of very low and extremely low sex ratios cannot be found elsewhere in Europe. Extraordinarily low sex ratios in a given region seem to be the consequence of specific local conditions. A high ‘surplus’ of males can, for example, be the result of the location of important military bases in a rural region. We should also bear in mind that regional disparities in the sex ratio (or a lack thereof) can also have administrative reasons. Cross-national differences in the intensity of regional disparities can, for example, be related to the delimitation of the NUTS 3 regions. In most states, urban regions are combined with their hinterland. This can lead to an equalisation of urban-rural differences. The examples of Germany and the UK illustrate that ‘female’ cities can exist within a ‘masculinised’ hinterland.

Map 7: Number of women in the age group of 20 to 24 per 100 coeval men 2011⁶



Own calculation; data source: EUROSTAT (2010) and national statistical offices

According to the ideal typical life course, young people in their early thirties have already completed their education, gained work experience, found a permanent job and are now ready to settle down and have children. After having established oneself in the labour market and having reached a satisfactory income level, the relative importance of living conditions increases. Housing standards and the geographical setting of the residence gain importance at the expense of factors oriented purely towards 'making a living' (LINDGREN 2003). Hence, migration patterns in this stage of life are often determined by the availability of high-quality housing in an attractive landscape. Residential mobility of couples in their twenties and early thirties, especially moves into home-ownership, is frequently connected to a coming birth or concrete plans to have children. There are several motivations to relocate for prospective parents. The current accommodation or neighbourhood may be too small, too expensive or not suitable for children. Some couples may also think that the city is not a good place to raise children and plan on moving to suburban or rural regions. In public perception, rurality is

⁶ Greece: 2001; Romania: 2002; Malta: 2006 (Census data)

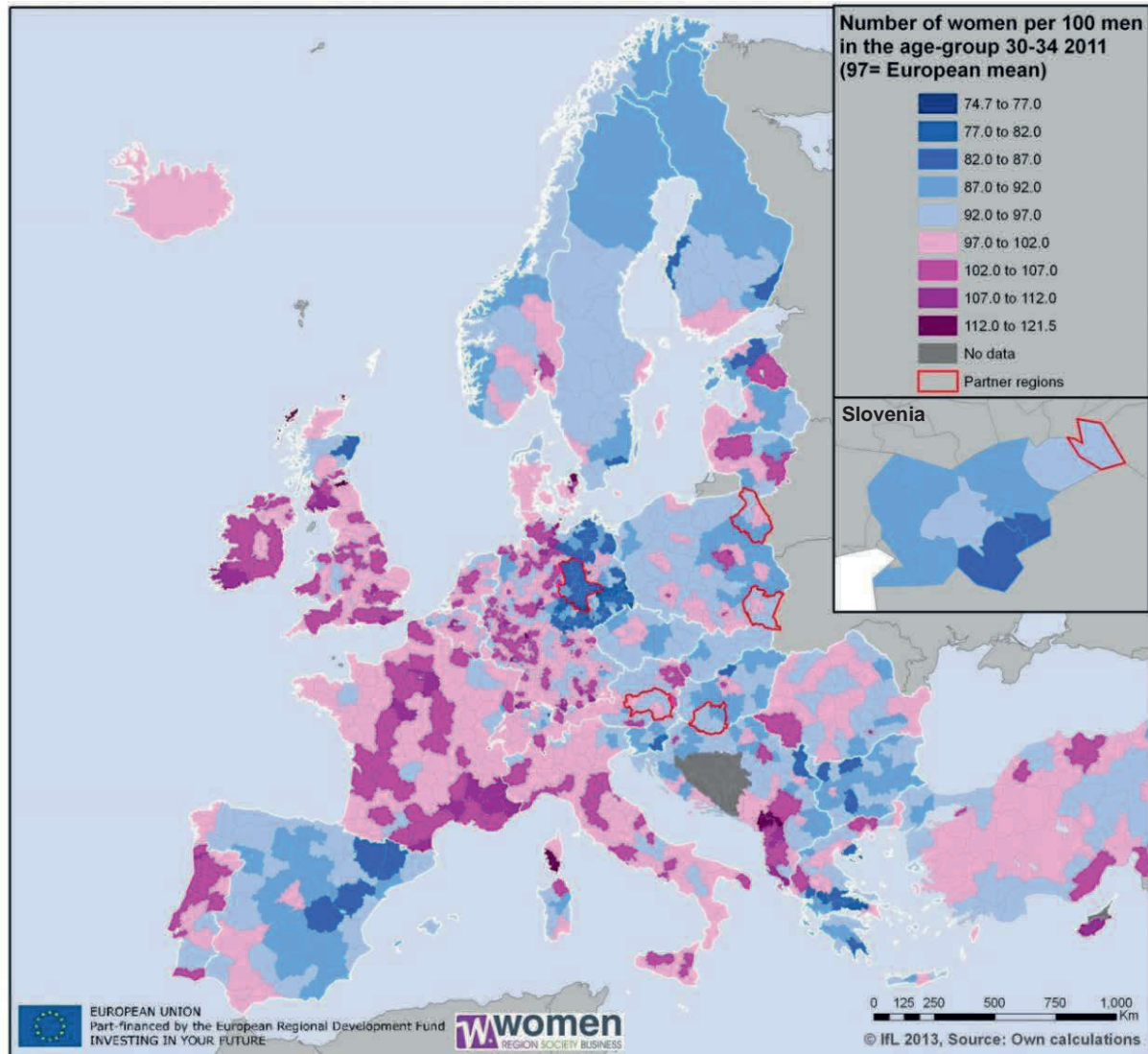
frequently linked to the concept of the 'rural idyll'. Rural regions are seen as problem-free and nature-oriented places with closely-knit communities and inhabitants that share traditional family values. Social problems, e.g. poverty, crime or homelessness are, on the other hand, perceived as characteristically urban.⁷ The urban, both as a nightmare and a dream is consequently imagined as the antithesis of rurality (YARWOOD 2005). Occupational considerations are usually of minor importance when people decide to move to peripheral rural regions. Migration is primarily motivated by lifestyle considerations, e.g. the desire to live in harmony with nature in a quiet, safe place with tight neighbourly relationships (LINDGREN 2003, RIVERA ESCRIBANO 2007). In-migration to rural communities should, however, not automatically be equated to the quest for the 'rural idyll'. FITCHEN (1995) finds that the seemingly counterintuitive in-migration of poor people (especially if they are young and childless) to depressed rural towns is in fact an economically rational behaviour due to low housing costs, even if they leave places with better job opportunities. She concludes:

"For some immigrants, the move represents an attempt to find a living situation that will minimize the negative consequences of their own employment handicaps, their lack of education, inadequate job preparation, or limited work histories. For some, the move minimizes negative consequences of physical or emotional problems or of developmental disabilities because there are no employment opportunities anyway – but housing is cheap." (1995: 195)

With respect to the question of whether to return to one's childhood home or not, social networks may play an important role. People with children tend to live closer to their parents. Recent research has shown that moves towards adult children or parents are usually induced by the need for assistance or contact. In many cases, it is the younger generation that moves close to the older generation, especially in rural regions and when siblings still live close to the parental home (MICHIELIN & MULDER 2007, MULDER & COOKE 2009, SMITS 2010). Other examples of how social networks and individual biographies influence migration behaviour and residential choice include the inter-generational transmission of homeownership through gift-giving and socialisation (HELDERMAN & MULDER 2007) and the fact that the place of birth plays a decisive part in shaping preferences for a specific residential environment later in life. People born in rural and suburban areas tend to develop a preference for rural living later in life (FEIJTEN et al. 2008). A reason for why people return to the type of residential environment of their childhood may be the attempt to recreate elements from one's childhood which provides continuity and a sense of security over one's life course. The individual concept of 'rurality' is, however, rather general and not tied to the place where they grew up in many cases meaning that they may not return to their hometown but move to more accessible rural regions with better infrastructure facilities and labour market conditions instead. In this sense, it seems that suburban areas are 'rural enough' for most people. In these regions, one can settle in a rural environment that is safe and valuable to children and maintain contact with the urban labour market at the same time (HJORT & MALMBERG 2006).

⁷ Poverty, crime and other social problems may be less visible in rural areas, but this does not mean that they do not exist (see e.g. CARRINGTON & SCOTT 2008, DUNCAN & LAMBORGHINI 1994, PACIONE 2004; SHUBIN 2007, WILLISCH 2008).

Map 8: Number of women in the age group of 30 to 34 per 100 coeval men 2008



Own calculations; data source: EUROSTAT (2010) and national statistical offices

A large body of literature exists which shows that family migration is usually to the benefit of the man's career. Women's economic status tends to suffer as a result of family migration. They are less likely to be employed, work shorter hours and have smaller incomes. Family migration appears to be only weakly influenced by economic rationale and more by lifestyle considerations or the desire to be near family members, in particular parents and siblings. Overall, family migration to rural and suburban areas seems to strengthen traditional gender roles and to reinforce the position of the man as the main breadwinner of the family (BOYLE et al. 2006).

Map 8 confirms that there is indeed a trend that the low sex ratios in the age group of 20 to 24 years even out as people form stable partnerships and have children, but only in Western Europe. The gap between 'female' cities and a 'male' countryside is still the dominant spatial pattern in the post-socialist states. The 're-feminisation' of the countryside in Western Europe primarily affects well-accessible regions as well as predominantly rural regions with minor urban centres. Peripheral, old-industrialised and economically weak regions, on the other hand, tend to be characterised by a more or less pronounced surplus of men in this age group. Accessible intermediate and rural areas may be perceived as a compromise between the good

job and earning potentials in major urban centres and the ideal to offer one's children a 'perfect childhood'. The 'surplus' of women in the major urban centres that was a typical feature of the regional pattern of sex-ratio imbalances in the age groups of 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 is less pronounced in the age group of 30 to 34 or has even turned into a slight 'deficit'. Eastern Germany is a special case with an extremely high 'deficit' of women in almost all rural districts. Women not returning or moving in in their early thirties – which is the case in many rural regions in Western Germany – significantly aggravates the demographic problems of the region. A strong 'deficit' of women in the most fertile age group lowers the regional reproductive potential and accelerates depopulation and ageing.

3.3 Some Final Thoughts

Which conclusions can be drawn from this literature overview? First of all, it is necessary to recognise that migration and mobility are gendered and affect women and men differently. Second, the individual context matters. Individuals with certain tastes, preferences, expectations and goals move. These individuals are integrated into social networks. This means that strategies for dealing with the brain-drain of young women cannot be 'one-size-fits-all' approaches but have to be tailor-made for a specific target group (see chapters 6 and 7). Revitalising the countryside means more than 'just' creating jobs (which is of course difficult enough), especially in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe. The attractiveness of a region also depends on the availability of services. Especially in-migrants from urban areas take a certain level and quality of services for granted (BELL et al. 2009). A retreat of the state (and the market) from the provision of a basic level of services of general interest is in this regard as detrimental as deindustrialisation and deagriculturalisation. SPOOR (2013: 155) calls for more public investment in productive and social infrastructure to reduce social exclusion and to prevent small and remote villages from having 'no future at all'. With regard to employment opportunities, a strong public sector is especially important because it provides jobs for educated women. MUILU & RUSANEN (2003), for instance, bring forward the argument that the 'masculinisation' of small settlements in Kainuu, Finland, was caused by job cuts in the female-dominated public sector, especially in social and health care during the deep recession in the early 1990s. Many women were forced to move to the population centres where better employment opportunities exist. Another strategy, which is also pursued in the WOMEN project, is to foster female entrepreneurship and self-employment. Summing up, it can be said that it is very difficult for peripheral and economically weak rural regions to overcome their problems without external support. Economic decline and social problems are less visible in rural areas than for example in impoverished urban neighbourhoods. As a consequence, the problems of rural regions are often ignored or disregarded by policy makers or planners at the national and European level (SZUL 2006). It is uncertain what the future will bring. Some authors are convinced that the adaption of new information and communication technologies will herald an era of heightened mobility, while others argue that these technologies will only raise daily and virtual mobility but result in increasing residential rootedness (COOKE 2013). The rise in the share of dual-earner households contributes to this trend as their residential mobility is especially low. What draws these households to the large cities (and keeps them there) is the diversity and the economic mix of these places (PENDAKUR & YOUNG 2013).

4 Demographic Trends and Developments: The Study Regions in a European Comparison (*Tim Leibert*)

In order to develop strategies and policy measures to limit the out-migration of young women or to deal with its unfavourable consequences for the future social and economic development of rural regions, it is necessary to take the population structure and population development of the region in question into account. The out-migration of young women is only a threat for regional development if it is not counterbalanced by a sufficient in-migration of women who want to raise their family in the region. Against this backdrop, it is not sufficient to only analyse the migration patterns of young women, but to also look into the general demographic situation of the case study regions. It is also necessary to broaden the picture by comparing the WOMEN regions to other rural regions in Europe: Is the demographic situation in our partner regions especially bleak and challenging or more or less comparable to the rural 'mainstream' in Europe? In this chapter, the current population development trends at the regional, i.e. NUTS 3 level, in the EU 28, EFTA and selected other countries will be analysed via three typologies with a special emphasis on the case study regions. The chapter is structured around three central questions:

- What are the main drivers of the regional population development?
- Does the population structure affect the sustainability of the population development?
- How pronounced is the sex-selectivity of out-migration?

We will address the *first question* with a typology of the drivers of regional population change: migration and the balance of births and deaths. Regions with a sustainable population development are characterised by in-migration and a favourable or at least stable natural population development. Regions with an unsustainable demographic development are, on the other hand, trapped in a vicious circle of out-migration, ageing and depopulation. With the *second question*, we take into account that the demographic development of a given region is heavily influenced by the age structure of the population. Neglecting the population structure can lead to erroneous conclusions about the sustainability of the population development. If, for instance, the number of potential parents is high in a given region as a result of high birth rates in the past, the number of births can exceed the number of deaths even if the number of children per woman is very low. If fertility remains at a low level for a longer period of time, the region in question will experience dynamic ageing and a surplus of deaths in the medium term. We can get a more complete picture of the present and future demographic situation with a typology that includes indicators on both the current population structure and recent ageing trends. With the *third question*, we return to the patterns and consequences of selective migration. The third typology deals with regional differences in the sex structure of the young adult population. We use this indicator as an indirect proxy measure of the sex-specific differences in migration behaviour. It is, unfortunately, impossible to conduct a Europe-wide analysis of age- and sex-specific migration rates due to data restrictions. Since selective migration is – as will be shown below – the chief cause of unbalanced sex ratios at the regional level, the spatial pattern of 'deficits' and 'surpluses' of women makes it possible to show which regions are notably faced with sex-selective out-migration of young women.

4.1 A Typology of the Drivers of Regional Population Change

The demographic development of a given region is determined by two factors: natural population change and the balance of migration.⁸

The *rate of natural population change* is defined as the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths per 1000 inhabitants. In the absence of migration, the regional population would decrease if the rate of natural population change is negative because the number of deaths exceeds the number of births. A surplus of deaths is the consequence of low birth rates, an unfavourable regional population structure with a high percentage of senior citizens like in Eastern Germany and/or high death rates and a relatively low life expectancy. The latter applies to Latvia and Lithuania and – to a lesser degree – Hungary. It is, on the other hand, also possible that regions with low fertility exhibit a surplus of births if a region has a ‘young’ population with a relatively high proportion of inhabitants in their twenties and thirties and a relatively low share of senior citizens. This is, for example, the case in Poland.

The *balance of migration* is defined as the difference between the number of in-migrants and the number of out-migrants per 1000 inhabitants. The balance of internal migration only takes migration streams between the different regions of a country into account, while in the balance of international migration only migrants are considered that cross national borders. The spatial pattern of the balances of internal and international migration may be very different. Large urban areas like London or Paris are for instance very attractive for international migrants (positive international balance) but rather unattractive for internal migrants, e.g. young families that move to more rural regions with lower real estate prices (negative internal balance).

Table 3: Typology of the drivers of regional population change

Type	Total population change	Migration	Natural change
1	Population growth	In-migration	Positive
2			Negative
3		Out-migration	Positive
4	Depopulation	In-migration	Negative
5		Out-migration	
6			

The schematic typology of the drivers of regional population change presented below (map 9) is based on the six possible combinations of the rates of natural population change, migration and total population change (table 3).

Type 1 is the most favourable case. The regional population grows as a result of in-migration and a surplus of births. The in-migration of persons of childbearing age can to a certain extent also cushion falling birth rates of the native population and slow down the ageing of the population which is a general trend across Europe. Type 1 is the most sustainable pattern of regional population development, both in the short and in the long term. The primary objective of planners and decision makers should be to preserve and enhance the attractiveness of the region for families and domestic and international migrants. Possible measures to achieve this goal could be inter alia the provision of high-quality education and childcare facilities, a family-oriented housing policy and promoting a ‘culture of welcome’ at all societal levels.

⁸ See also ESPON & NIDI (2010) for a more detailed discussion of the impact of the respective drivers on the regional population development (including trend scenarios until 2050) at the NUTS 2-level.

Type 1 is the most frequent type in the analysed part of Europe (461 of 1484⁹ NUTS 3 regions). It is also the most 'urban' type: Predominantly urban regions¹⁰ are clearly overrepresented, while rural and agrarian regions are considerably underrepresented (table 4). This is in line

Table 4: Typology of the drivers of regional population change: Percentage of NUTS 3 regions per type by accessibility and economic structure.

EDORA structural type	Number of NUTS-3 regions						total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Predominantly urban	178	78	35	14	49	75	429
Agrarian	35	13	15	13	50	84	210
Consumption	129	87	16	9	55	165	461
Diversified	84	47	28	9	24	53	245
Total	426	225	94	45	178	377	1345

EDORA urban/rural type	Number of NUTS-3 regions						total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Predominantly urban	178	78	35	14	49	75	429
Intermediate	154	92	32	11	45	153	487
Rural	94	55	28	21	84	149	431
Total	426	225	95	46	178	377	1347

EDORA structural type	Share of NUTS-3 regions						total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Predominantly urban	42%	35%	37%	31%	28%	20%	32%
Agrarian	8%	6%	16%	29%	28%	22%	16%
Consumption	30%	39%	17%	20%	31%	44%	34%
Diversified	20%	21%	30%	20%	13%	14%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

EDORA urban/rural type	Share of NUTS-3 regions						total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Predominantly urban	42%	35%	37%	30%	28%	20%	32%
Intermediate	36%	41%	34%	24%	25%	41%	36%
Rural	22%	24%	29%	46%	47%	40%	32%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

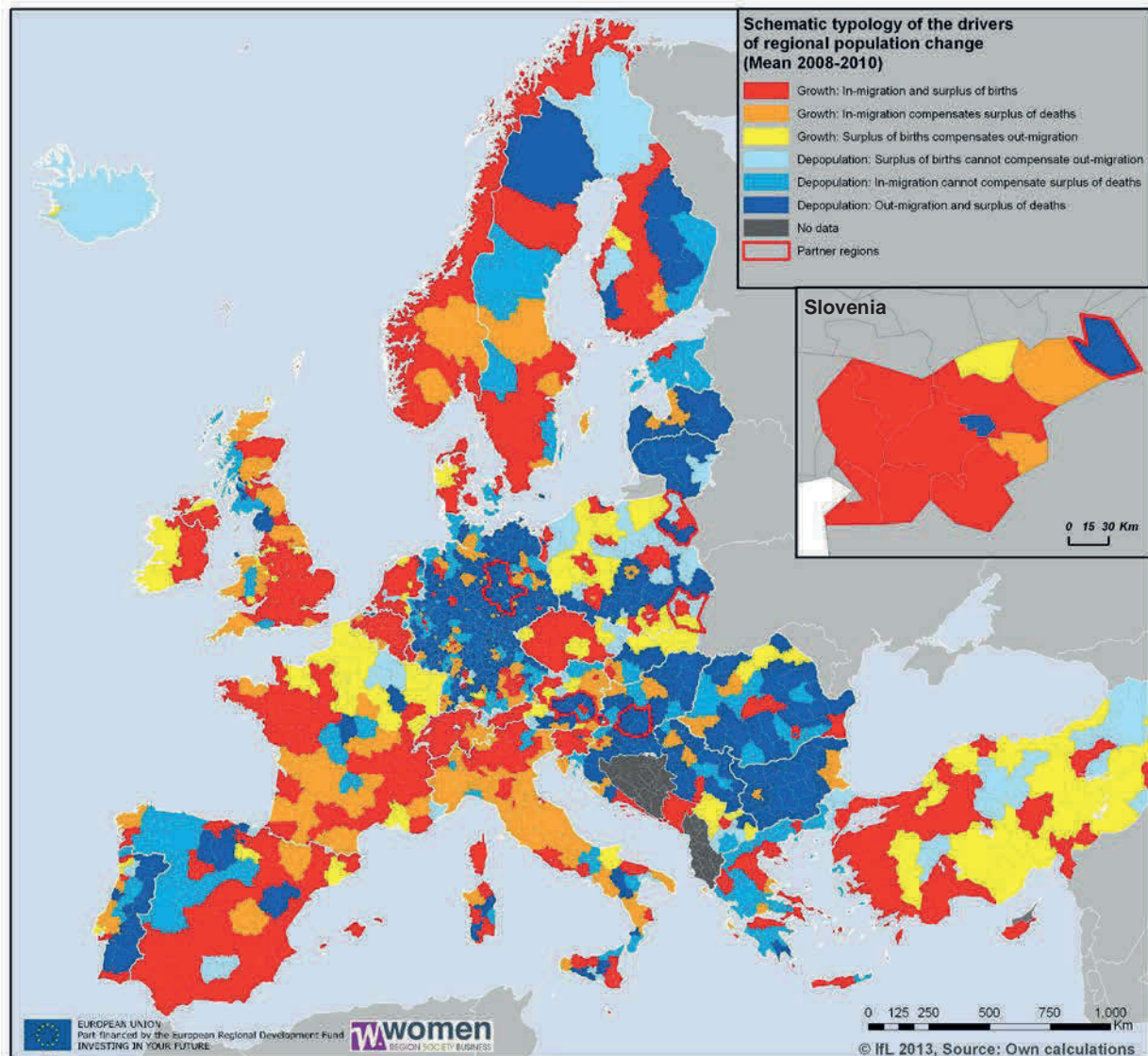
with the observation that in many European countries, a trend towards a concentration of the population in the economic core regions can be witnessed, while peripheral and structurally weak areas are affected by depopulation (SKIFTER ANDERSEN 2011). This general pattern also seems to be transferable to the local level, especially in sparsely populated regions. Case studies suggest that the spill-over effects of the regional centre tend to be limited to its commuter belt. The socio-economic decline, depopulation and ageing of the peripheral and remote municipalities outside the commuter zone of the regional centres or local employment hubs are difficult to reverse even in times of economic growth (LEHTONEN & TYKKYLÄINEN 2011).

Only three sub-regions of the WOMEN partner regions belong to type 1: the statistical region of Graz (Styria), the Białostocki sub-region (Podlaskie) and the Rzeszowski subregion (Podkarpackie). These regions consist of the regional centre and its immediate hinterland. It is obvious that the distinction between growing – both demographically and economically – core regions and declining peripheries is not only visible at the European and national level but also at the regional and even local level. This pattern also confirms that the regional centres play a crucial role for regional development – but also that the hope for spread effects of this growth to more remote parts of the region cannot be taken for granted.

⁹ EU 28 and EFTA states plus Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia and Turkey

¹⁰ See ESPON & UHI MILLENNIUM INSTITUTE (2010) for a description of the EDORA typologies.

Map 9: Typology of the drivers of regional population change 2011



Own calculations based on EUROSTAT data.

In Type 2, population growth is dependent on in-migration because the natural population development is negative. The 230 NUTS 3 regions that belong to this type are by trend urban regions, intermediate regions with a diversified economic structure or intermediate regions in the consumption countryside. Rural and agrarian regions are underrepresented. Type 2 is quite common in prosperous regions with low fertility and a relatively 'old' population, but also in scenic regions that are a destination for retirement migration. The city of Magdeburg (Saxony-Anhalt), which is the only example for a type 2 region in the WOMEN partner regions, represents a third pattern: university cities and regional centres in economically weak regions. Young migrants move to these regions to get an education and to enter the labour market, but as a result of the conditions on the regional labour market, many of them (have to) leave before founding a family. The sustainability of the population development in type 2 regions is generally low. For regional policy and planning it is essential to maintain the attractiveness for international and internal migrants and to implement measures to increase the birth rate and/or to reduce the death rate. The regional economic and labour market policy should focus on

improving the job situation of young people, especially young women, and on enhancing the compatibility of family and career.

In Type 3, a surplus of births more than compensates the negative migration balance. The 135 type 3 regions are largely average with respect to their spatial structure. Yet, regions in the consumption countryside are under- and regions with a diversified economic structure are overrepresented. The sustainability of the regional population development is fairly high in the short term, but rather low in the long term if young people are overrepresented among the out-migrants which would weaken the reproductive potential (fewer births) of the regional population and accelerate the ageing process (more deaths). Generally speaking, type 3 is quite common in northern and western Poland. This can be explained by a favourable population structure due to high birth rates in the past. In the WOMEN partner regions, the Krośnieński sub-region (Podkarpackie) is the only representative of type 3. Regional development strategies in type 3 regions should focus on maintaining the regional reproductive potential, e.g. by reducing selective out-migration or the implementation of pro-natalist measures.

Type 4 is similar to type 3, with the exception that the surplus of births is too low to balance the loss of population caused by out-migration. The 65 type 4 regions are largely rural; agrarian regions are overrepresented while regions in the consumption countryside are again underrepresented. The sustainability of the population development is low. If young people and women are overrepresented among the out-migrants it is foreseeable that the regional reproductive potential will deteriorate and that the surplus of births will turn into a surplus of deaths in the medium or even short term. Given the obviously low attractiveness of these regions for internal and international in-migrants, a reversal of the trend is rather unlikely. In the WOMEN partner regions, the Tarnobrzski sub-region, the Przemyski sub-region (both Podkarpackie) as well as the Suwalski sub-region (Podlaskie) belong to type 4.

Type 5 is characterised by a positive migration balance; however, the deficit of births outbalances the influx of new inhabitants from other regions. Agrarian and rural regions are overrepresented among the 186 regions that belong to this type. The political response to the demographic challenges of type 5 regions is basically consistent with the measures described for type 2. However, given the low accessibility and outdated economic structure of many of the regions in question, finding solutions to make the regional population development more sustainable seems to be more difficult. A basic precondition to attract internal and international migrants seems to be a 'culture of welcome' which includes (1) providing quality services, (2) affordable, suitable and adequate housing, (3) educational opportunities, (4) job opportunities with adequate wages and (5) an openness of the local society to integrate the newcomers into the community (DEPNER & TEIXEIRA 2012). There are two type 5 regions in the WOMEN area: the Western and Southern Styria region in Austria and the City of Halle (Saale) in Saxony-Anhalt.

Type 6 is the least sustainable type of regional population development. The 407 regions that belong to this type are characterised by out-migration and a negative natural population development. Two thirds of the NUTS3 regions in the WOMEN area (21 out of 31) belong to type 6: The city of Dessau-Roßlau and all rural districts in Saxony-Anhalt; all counties in Dél-Dunántúl, Pomurje, the subregions Liezen, Eastern Upper Styria, Eastern Styria and Western Styria in Austria as well as the Łomżyński region in Podlaskie.

It is very difficult to break the self-enforcing demographic downward spiral of depopulation, ageing and out-migration – especially against the backdrop that the reasons for why regions lose inhabitants are often difficult to influence by regional policy. MCGRANAHAN et al. (2010) note that a substantial proportion of high out-migration regions are neither poor nor characterised by low human capital; out-migration from relatively prosperous regions is related to characteristics that are difficult or impossible to change: low population density, geographic isolation, and a lack of scenic amenities. Potential in-migrants, in particular highly skilled out-migrants from urban areas, seem to avoid peripheral rural regions without scenic landscapes. For this group, environmental qualities and attractive landscapes – together with the accessibility of urban areas – are the dominant pull-factors. High out-migration regions are hence often unable to attract in-migrants without pre-existing social ties to the area. A very high proportion of the people that move to these regions are returnees. Many of them are in their twenties and thirties and return to raise children or to be closer to family and friends (BIJKER et al. 2012, MCGRANAHAN et al. 2010). Research by NADLER & WESLING (2013, see also NIEDOMYSL & AMCOFF 2011 on Sweden and VON REICHERT et al. 2011, 2014 on the USA) on return migration to Eastern Germany shows that economic considerations are important reasons for leaving rural regions while social networks, especially the presence of family and friends, are the main motives for eventually coming back. Many return migrants are willing to accept economic sacrifices to live close to family members and friends and to be able to enjoy the qualities of rural life. The number of out-migrants that would like to return to their rural home region is much higher than the number of actual return migrants. In most cases, a desire to return cannot be realised due to the local job situation despite an individual willingness to make sacrifices. VON REICHERT et al. (2011: 50) describe the situation many potential re-migrants are faced with and why there is only a limited ‘window of opportunity’:

“Outmigrants make substantial efforts to locate employment, exercise patience until job opportunities open up, accept career sacrifices, or become creative and entrepreneurial in order to move back. If employment does not become available within a certain time frame, the window of opportunity for attracting return migrants back to rural communities narrows. Over time, outmigrants’ ties to the rural home town diminish, while ties to a community elsewhere grow.”

Another reason to return to less popular regions that is also partly connected to the presence of social support networks is the need to cope with major life course transitions such as a divorce. As WALL & VON REICHERT note divorced returnees are often motivated by the “*need to build continuity with their past*”. They “*use these past memories, experiences and knowledge of place to create a sense of stability, safety, and familiarity*” (2013: 360). In this regard, pre-existing support networks are the justification for moves that are connected to economic sacrifices.

There is another important – nevertheless much smaller – group of in-migrants to less popular rural regions: persons with a low income who are attracted by low real estate prices offering them the opportunity to fulfil their residential preferences (BIJKER et al. 2012, FOULKES & NEWBOLD 2008). Against this backdrop it seems advisable to develop strategies to link the oversupply on the real estate market in shrinking regions to the untapped demand for rural

living in regions with high rents and real estate prices. The prerequisite for this strategy to work is, however, that there are also local jobs available for the in-migrants. The ongoing deindustrialisation of the countryside and foreseeable job losses in the service sector caused by shrinking demand due to depopulation will probably strain the rural labour markets in the future. But there is, on the other hand, also already a labour shortage in many ageing regions in the health sector and other personalised services. Strategies to fill these job vacancies by offering attractive and cheap housing might turn out to be a win-win-situation for the in-migrants and the region as a whole.

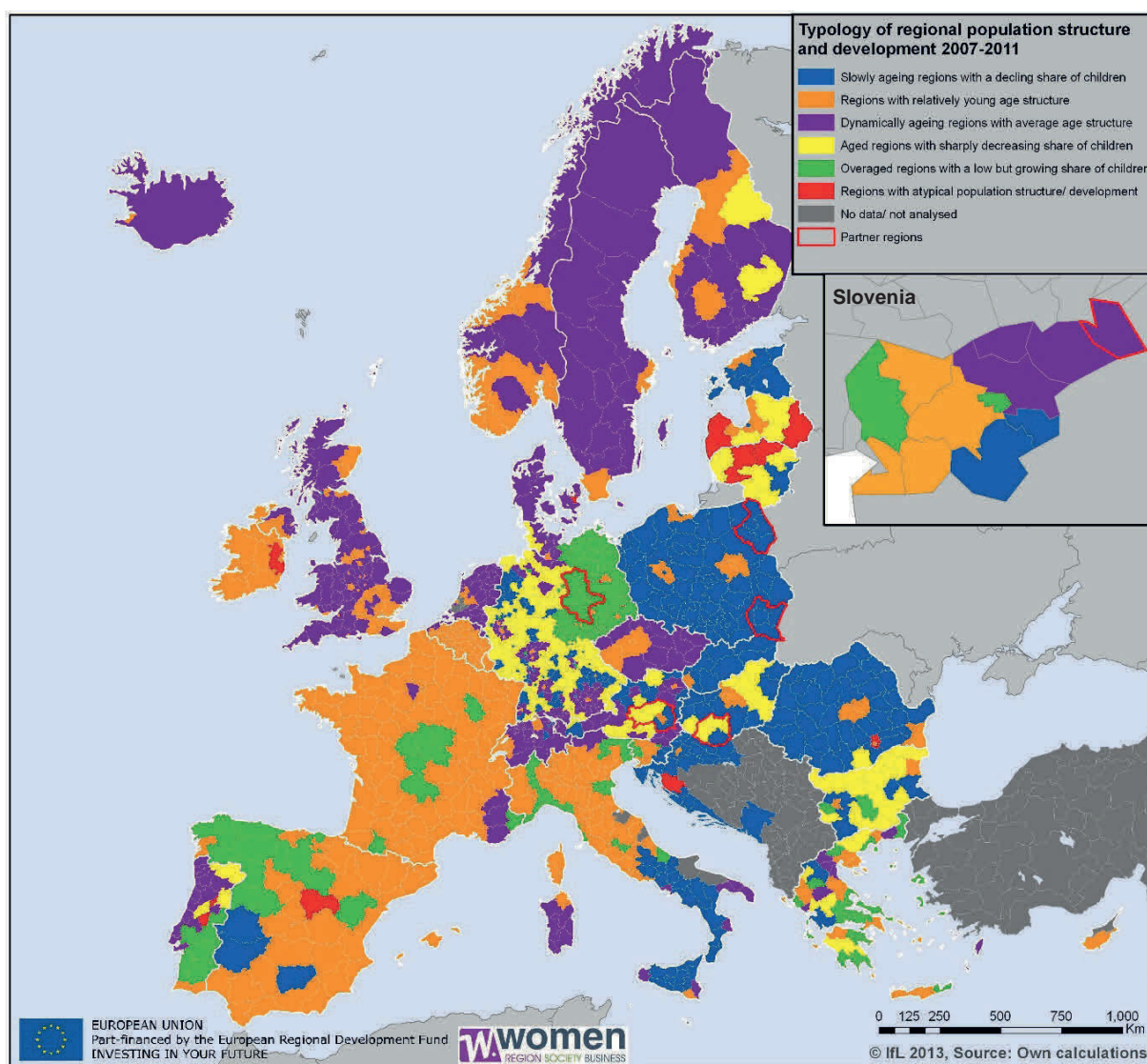
4.2 A Typology of Regional Population Structure and Development

The regional age structure is an important explanation for the natural population development and the migration patterns in a given region. Against this backdrop, a typology of the regional population structures was calculated using both indicators related to the current age structure and the development of the most important age groups between 2007 and 2011. The analysis has resulted in five types of regional population structures (table 5).

The regions that belong to type 1 (n=262) can be characterised as '*slowly ageing regions with a declining share of children*'. This type is more or less average with respect to accessibility; however, with regard to economic structure, agrarian regions are overrepresented, while the consumption countryside is clearly underrepresented (table 6). The old rule that rural, especially agrarian areas are high-fertility regions is obviously no longer true. The negative effects of demographic change will, however, affect type 1 regions only in the long term since the population is still relatively young. Regional stakeholders have time left to develop strategies and measures for dealing with ageing and depopulation. A constant inflow of young people and families might help to maintain a relatively favourable population structure. In the WOMEN area, all sub-regions of Podkarpackie and Podlaskie belong to type 1, as well as Baranya County in Hungary and the sub-regions of Eastern Styria as well as Western and Southern Styria in Austria.

Type 2 (n= 358) contains regions with a relatively high and increasing share of children and a growing proportion of working-age people. The proportion of senior citizens is relatively low, but increasing significantly. Nonetheless, type 2 represents the most favourable population structure in Europe. The regions seem to be attractive for all age groups, especially young families. Regional stakeholders should aim at maintaining and enhancing the attractiveness for young people in general and young families in particular without ignoring the need to develop policy measures to deal with the strong tendency towards ageing. Type 2 regions are predominantly urban, while rural regions are underrepresented. Intermediate regions with a diversified economic structure, on the other hand, are somewhat overrepresented. In the WOMEN area, the sub-region of Graz (Austria) is the sole type 2 representative.

Map 10: Typology of regional population structure and development 2007-2011



Source: Own calculation based on EUROSTAT data.

Table 5: Typology of regional population structures: Cluster characteristics

Demographic indicator	Cluster				
	1	2	3	4	5
Share of retirees 2011 (age group 65-x) in %	16,6	17,2	18,8	21,1	23,6
Share of children 2011 (age group 0-15) in %	14,7	16,6	15,8	13,7	12,0
Development age group 0-15 (2007-2011) in %	-5,1	4,7	-3,3	-10,4	3,0
Development age group 15-65 (2007-2011) in %	0,5	3,0	0,1	-2,6	-4,4
Development age group 65-x (2007-2011) in %	1,0	5,2	8,7	1,3	2,6

Type 3 (n=320) is made up of ‘*dynamically ageing regions with average age structure*’. The regions that belong to this type are average in almost every respect; the only characteristic that stands out is the low share of agrarian regions. The rapidly increasing number of inhabitants over 65 is an unmistakable sign that the process of demographic change is in full swing in the type 3 regions. However, given the still relatively young population structure, it can be expected that structural depopulation – i.e. population decline caused by a surplus of deaths – is only to be expected in the medium or even long term giving the regions in question some time to adapt the infrastructure and the regional economy to the ageing population. Pomurje is the only representative of type 3 in the WOMEN area.

Table 6: Typology of regional population structures: NUTS3 regions by accessibility and economic structure

EDORA structural type	Number of NUTS-3 regions					
	1	2	3	4	5	total
Predominantly urban	67	150	105	55	42	419
Agrarian	90	26	19	39	28	202
Consumption	49	92	130	105	79	455
Diversified	36	88	65	24	29	242
Total	242	356	319	223	178	1318
EDORA urban/rural type	Number of NUTS-3 regions					
	1	2	3	4	5	total
Predominantly urban	67	150	105	55	42	419
Intermediate	82	132	118	78	67	477
Rural	93	75	97	90	69	424
Total	242	357	320	223	178	1320
EDORA structural type	Share of NUTS-3 regions					
	1	2	3	4	5	total
Predominantly urban	28%	42%	33%	25%	24%	32%
Agrarian	37%	7%	6%	17%	16%	15%
Consumption	20%	26%	41%	47%	44%	35%
Diversified	15%	25%	20%	11%	16%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
EDORA urban/rural type	Share of NUTS-3 regions					
	1	2	3	4	5	total
Predominantly urban	28%	42%	33%	25%	24%	32%
Intermediate	34%	37%	37%	35%	38%	36%
Rural	38%	21%	30%	40%	39%	32%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

would be necessary to stabilise the population development in the medium and long term. The former is more likely in economically strong regions with a high quality of life, while the latter is very difficult to influence politically, especially at the regional level. The representatives of type 4 in the WOMEN area are the sub-regions of Liezen, Eastern Styria and Western Styria (Austria) and Somogy and Tolna (Hungary).

Type 5 (n=178) can be characterised as ‘*overaged regions with a low, but growing share of children*’. This is the type with the most urgent demographic problems, despite the small silver lining that the proportion of children is increasing – although from a very low level – as a consequence of increasing birth rates in recent years. However, the high proportion of retirees leads to high death rates and will result in an intensification of depopulation in the short and medium term. Measures and strategies for dealing with ageing and depopulation should already have been developed and implemented. All urban and rural districts of Saxony-Anhalt belong to

The 223 regions that belong to type 4 (n=223) can be described as ‘*aged regions with a sharply declining share of children*’. This type is mostly made up of rural regions, especially regions that belong to the consumption countryside. Urban regions as well as rural and intermediate regions with a diversified economic structure are, on the other hand, underrepresented. The demographic change is in already well advanced in type 4 regions. The birth rate has been declining for some time, which is one reason for the relatively high share of senior citizens. Selective migration – e.g. the out-migration of young women or in-migration of the elderly into scenic regions – is the other. Given the already advanced position of type 4 regions in the ageing process, either a continued in-migration of young people and families or a significant increase of the regional birth rate

this type, confirming that this case study region is the forerunner with respect to demographic change and the region with the most urgent demographic problems.

So far, it has become clear that the case study regions have to face considerable demographic challenges. The demographic situation is by trend more sustainable in the regional centres and their immediate hinterland compared to the more remote and sparsely populated parts of the respective regions. The following section focuses on the questions of whether and to what extent the case study regions are also affected by sex-selective out-migration and – if they are – if the patterns diverge from the European rural ‘mainstream’. Before turning to the typology, we shortly discuss the drivers of regional differences in the sex ratio of the young adult population.

4.3 The Regional Sex Ratio as an Indicator for Sex-Selective Migration

The sex ratio of the population in a given age group depends on three factors – the sex ratio at birth, sex-specific differences in age-specific mortality rates, and sex-specific migration patterns.

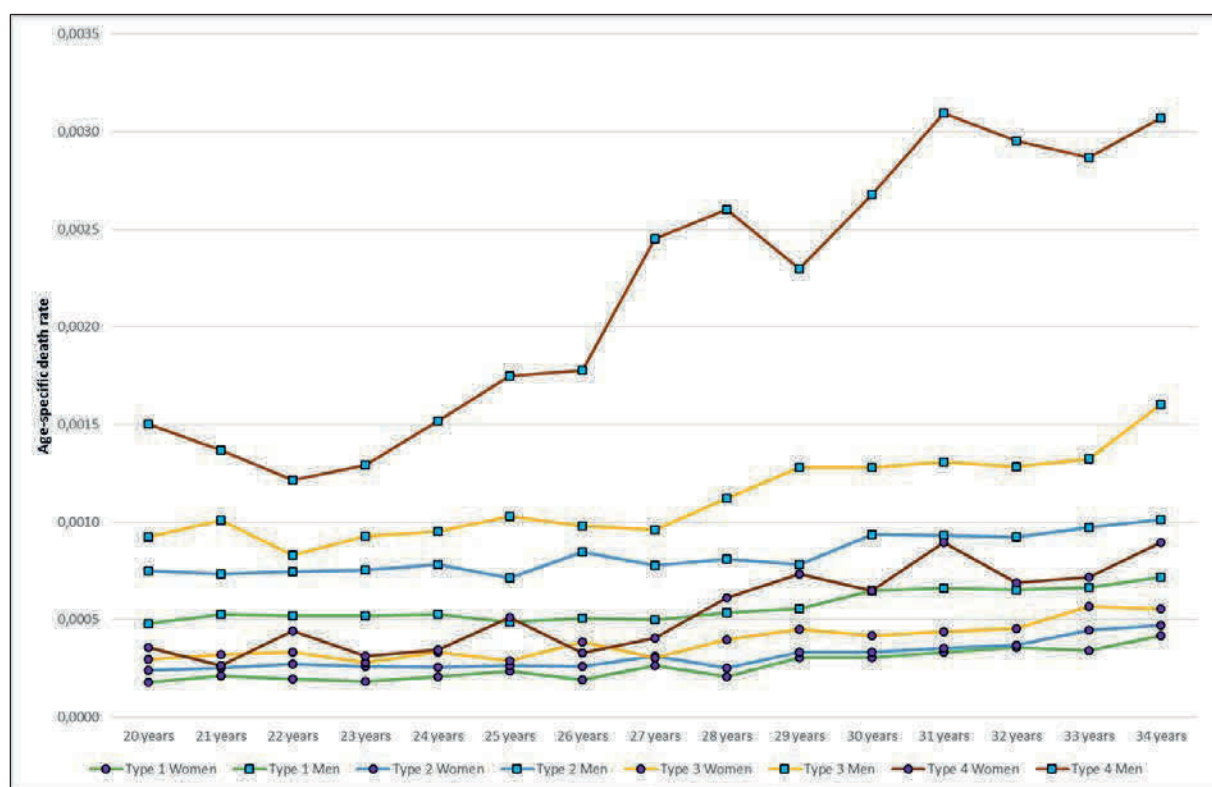
If not artificially manipulated by infanticide and sex-selective abortion, the sex ratio at birth is relatively constant at 104 to 108 boys per 100 newborn girls across human populations. Previous research has shown that the sex ratio at birth is influenced among others by family size, parental age and occupation, birth order, race, coital frequency, hormonal treatments, stress, diseases and exposure to environmental toxins (HUDSON & DEN BOER 2002, HESKETH & ZHU 2006). These factors take effect at the individual or the local level and are therefore unlikely to systematically influence the sex ratio at birth at the regional level which can be considered as being within the natural belt of fluctuation in the large majority of NUTS 2-regions in the period 1999-2009 (ESPON & IFL 2012). It is unlikely that the sex ratio at birth systematically influences the sex ratio in young adulthood in Europe since there are no signs for culturally conditioned sex preferences of prospective parents strong enough to lead to infanticide and sex-selective abortion. Europeans tend to either desire an equal number of children of both sexes or they do not have any sex preferences at all (HANK & KOHLER 2000). Survey data further indicates that using reproductive technology to select the sex of their children is out of the question for an overwhelming majority of prospective parents (ANDERSSON et al. 2007, DAHL et al. 2003).

While the sex ratio at birth favours males, girls and young women are less likely to die young. In the absence of differences in nutrition and health care, they have a higher resistance to disease and a greater overall longevity and are less likely to engage in risky behaviour and violence, two important factors which increase the odds of premature mortality for young men (HESKETH & ZHU 2006, COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES 2009, WALDRON et al. 2003). Given the higher survival rates of women, the sex ratio of a cohort increases over time. Based on sex-specific mortality rates, we can distinguish four mortality patterns in the age group of 20 to 34 in Europe¹¹ (figure 3): Type 1 with a low overall mortality and small differences between women and men (Denmark, Germany, Italy, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK), type 2 with a moderate overall mortality and differences of the sex-specific mortality rates (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland,

¹¹ The classification is based on a hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward method; author's calculation; data source: EUROSTAT, 2014) of the sex-specific mortality rates by single year of age in the EU, EFTA and Candidate Countries (without Turkey) with more than one million inhabitants.

Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia), type 3 with a rather high excess mortality of young men (Bulgaria, Finland, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and type 4 with very high death rates of young men in their twenties and especially early thirties and very pronounced sex-specific differences (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). The sex differences in the age-specific mortality rates of young adults with an excess mortality of young men are even more pronounced in the post-Soviet countries, especially in rural areas, e.g. in Belarus (KNAPPE et al. 2012) or the Russian Federation (LEIBERT & WIEST 2011). The influence of mortality on the sex structure of the young adult population is almost negligible in countries belonging to types 1 and 2 and small in the type-3 countries. The excess mortality of young men does, on the other hand, counterbalance the out-migration of young women to a certain degree in the Baltic and especially the post-soviet states, notably in the age groups of 25-29 and 30-34. This pattern is in part a result of high and growing alcohol consumption. Alcohol is, for instance, responsible for 25 % of the deaths of Estonian men. Drinking seems to be a significant part of the lives of rural young people, especially young men and acts as a cure for 'countryside depression' and wide-spread boredom in declining regions with missing activities and infrastructures for the young (TRELL et al. 2014).

Figure 3: Age- and sex-specific mortality rates



Source: Own calculation

Against the backdrop that the sex ratio at birth and sex-selective mortality patterns in young adulthood are at best minor influences, sex-selective migration patterns turn out to be the most important reason for imbalances in the sex structure of the population. Since the sex ratio at the national level is in the range of the 'natural' average in the EU27 countries (ESPON & IFL 2012), we can assume that imbalances in the sex structure of the population are first and foremost the consequence of sex-selective internal migration. If the differences in the regional sex ratio in the

analysed age groups are mostly attributable to sex-selective migration, it is possible to use this indicator as a proxy for the migration balance of young women and men to depict sex-selective migration patterns at the NUTS 3 level in a pan-European perspective. This approach has of course several drawbacks – it is, for instance, not possible to determine the volume and direction of migration flows – but it is without alternative given the scarcity of regional data on age- and sex-specific migration in some European countries. The regional population data is not flawless either. Students may still be registered at their parent's house even if they stay in their university town most of the time. There may also be sex-specific differences in registration behaviour. Against this backdrop, the typology should only be interpreted as an indication of the spatial movement of young Europeans.

4.4 A Typology of Regional Sex-Ratio Patterns

In chapter 3 we demonstrated that there are more or less pronounced differences in the spatial pattern of regional sex-ratio imbalances in the age groups of 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 and that the economic and non-economic influencing factors are highly dependent on the respective national and cultural context. The following typology is based on a cluster analysis of regional sex-ratio patterns at the NUTS 3 level and is intended to make this complexity more comprehensible. The variables used for calculating the cluster analysis were the number of women per 100 men in the age groups 20 to 24 and 30 to 34. If not mentioned otherwise, we used 2011 data (table 7; map 11).

In Type 1 '*moderate surplus of women*' (n=262), urban regions are overrepresented while rural regions are underrepresented (table 8). With regard to the economic structure, this type is otherwise more or less average. This type is characterised by a slight surplus of women in all age groups which is an indicator that type 1 regions are attractive places to get an education, enter the labour market and settle down to found a family. Only three sub-regions of the WOMEN partner regions belong to type 1: the statistical region of Graz (Styria), the Białostocki sub-region (Podlaskie) and the Rzeszowski sub-region (Podkarpackie). These are also the regions with the most sustainable population development in the WOMEN area (see above).

Types 3 and 4 are characterised by a more or less pronounced deficit of women in their early and mid-twenties which turns into a surplus of women in the late twenties and early thirties. Type 2 basically follows the same rule. The biggest difference to types 3 and 4 is that the sex structure of the population in their early twenties is balanced. Type 3 '*distinctive turnaround*' (n=21) is characterised by a particularly pronounced 'deficit' of women in the age group of 20-24 and a considerable 'lack' of men in the age group of 30-34. There is no representative of type 3 in the WOMEN area; the – predominantly rural – regions that belong to this type are mostly located in south-eastern Europe. Type 4 '*moderate turnaround*' (n=180) is characterised by a more moderate turnaround of the sex ratio. In the age-group of 20 to 24 there is a considerable 'deficit' of women, which turns into a minor surplus in the age-group 30 to 34. Type 4, which is very common in Denmark, France, Western Germany and the Netherlands, consists largely of rural and intermediate regions with good transport links to economic centres. Regions in the consumption countryside and regions with a diversified economic structure are

overrepresented. In the WOMEN partner regions, type 4 is only represented by two sub-regions: Upper Styria and Western Styria. Type 4 is a textbook example of the 'ideal typical' life course described above: Women leave in their early twenties to get an education and to enter the labour market. In their late twenties and early thirties they return or migrate to rural areas to found a family. The perhaps surprising fact that family formation can lead to unbalanced sex ratios can – to a certain extent – be traced back to the fact that women in Europe are on average 2-3 years younger than their male partners when they marry. It is therefore possible that both partners fall into different age groups. Type 2 '*feminising regions*' consists of 291 regions. Urban regions are overrepresented, while the share of rural and agrarian regions is quite low. No region in the WOMEN area belongs to type 2. Like in types 3 and 4, the number of women per 100 men increases over the life course. There is, however, no 'sex-ratio turnaround' because the sex structure is balanced in the age group of 20-24. This leads to the conclusion that these regions offer acceptable conditions to get an education and enter the labour market for many young people. Given the good accessibility of many type 2 regions, it is also possible that commuting is widespread.

Map 11: Typology of regional sex-ratio structures

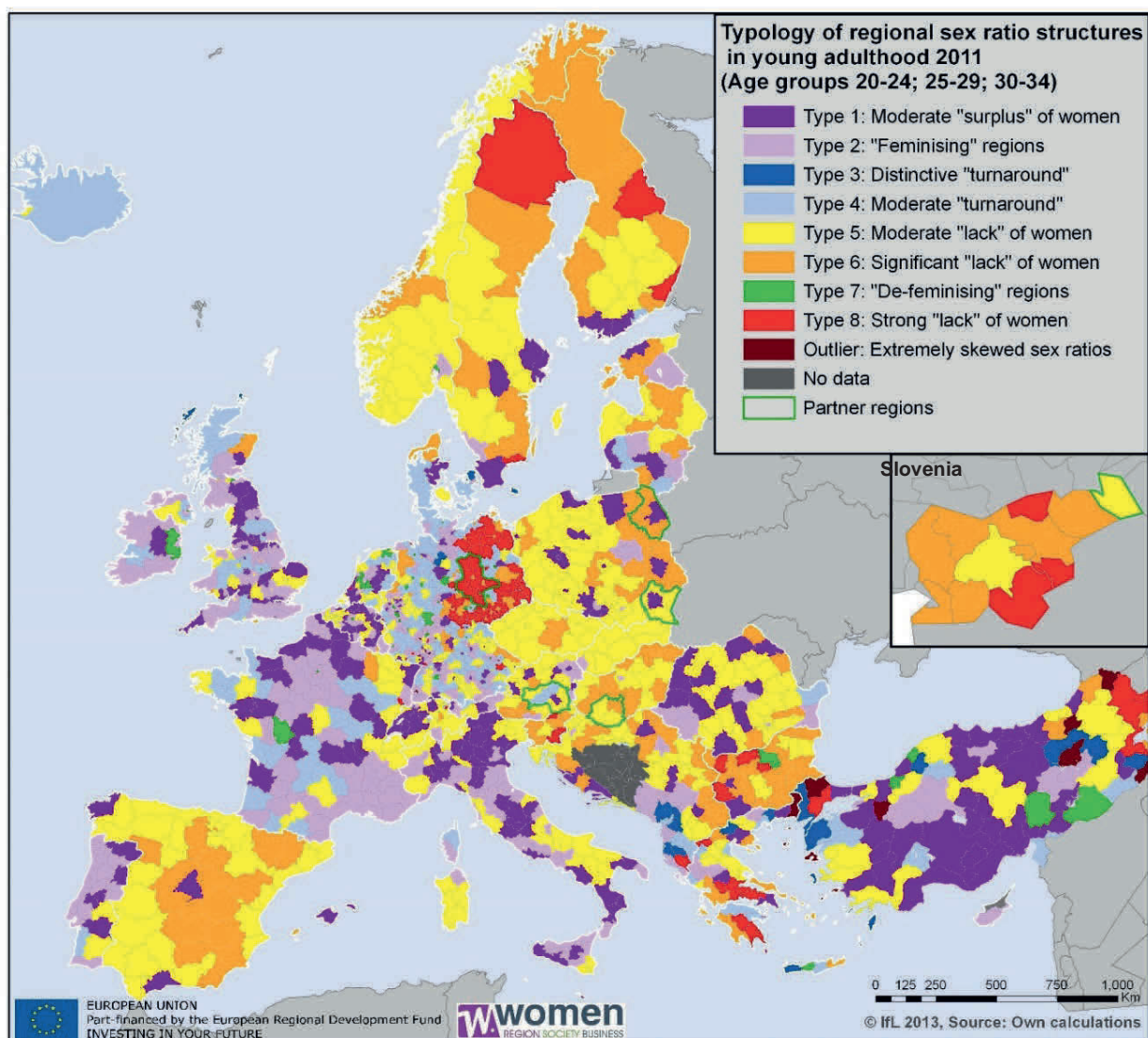


Table 7: Typology of regional sex ratio patterns: Cluster characteristics

	Women per 100 men in the age-group			Deviation of the sex ratio from the European mean in % in the age group			Number of regions
	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	
Type 1	100,1	99,4	99,1	3,7	2,1	1,6	262
Type 2	95,8	99,9	104,2	-0,7	2,6	6,9	292
Type 3	74,4	91,8	103,3	-22,9	-5,7	5,9	21
Type 4	86,5	93,7	99,5	-10,4	-3,8	2,1	182
Type 5	94,2	95,2	95,9	-2,4	-2,3	-1,6	391
Type 6	91,9	90,2	89,9	-4,8	-7,4	-7,8	191
Type 7	113,9	101,9	96,6	18,0	4,6	-0,9	46
Type 8	81,1	83,4	85,4	-16,0	-14,4	-12,4	100
Mean	96,5	97,4	97,5	0,0	0,0	0,0	1485

Source: Own calculation

Types 5, 6 and 8 represent regions with a more or less pronounced 'deficit' of women in the age groups of 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34. In type 5 '*moderate lack of women*', the number of women per 100 men is slightly below the European average in all age groups. This is the largest group (n=394) and represents the non-metropolitan 'mainstream', i.e. the proportion of agrarian regions, consumption countryside regions and regions with a diversified economic structure is essentially consistent with the EU average. Type 5 is very common in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Norway, Spain and Slovakia. In addition to Pomurje, the following sub-divisions of the WOMEN partner regions belong to type 5: Baranya and Somogy (Hungary), the statistical regions of Liezen, Eastern Styria and Western and Southern Styria (Austria) as well as the Krośnieński, Przemyski and Tarnobrzeski sub-regions in Podkarpackie.

Type 6 '*significant lack of women*' (n=191) is characterised by a significant 'deficit' of women in all age groups. Rural regions are overrepresented as are agrarian regions while urban areas and regions with a diversified economic structure are underrepresented. This confirms the assumption that a 'male-oriented' economic structure with a high proportion of the labour force employed in agriculture, the manufacturing trade and the building industry is an important explanation for sex-ratio imbalances. Type 6 is very common in Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. Of the WOMEN partner regions, the following statistical regions belong to type 6: Tolna County in South Transdanubia, the urban districts of Dessau-Roßlau and Magdeburg in Saxony-Anhalt as well as the Łomżyński and Suwalski sub-regions in Podlaskie.

Type 8 '*strong lack of women*' (n=99) stands out with a massive 'deficit' of women in all age groups. Type 8 is predominantly rural and consists largely of consumption countryside regions. More than 70% of the regions are located in Germany, especially in the Eastern States - including all rural districts of Saxony-Anhalt. The concentration of regions with extremely unbalanced sex ratios suggests that Eastern Germany is a special case and that the reasons for the strong 'deficit' of young women are connected to the German Reunification. In addition to the pronounced economic gap between Western Germany and the former GDR e.g. regarding youth

unemployment or income, there are still large cultural differences e.g. regarding the labour force participation of mothers with small children (SCHNEIDER 2013).

Table 8: Typology of regional sex-ratio patterns: Percentage and number of NUTS 3 regions per cluster by accessibility and economic structure

EDORA structural type	Number of NUTS-3 regions								total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Predominantly urban	111	123	1	23	79	35	34	18	424
Agrarian	27	13	4	16	75	60	2	11	208
Consumption	44	83	5	85	129	59	3	52	460
Diversified	44	59	0	48	67	13	3	12	246
Total	226	278	10	172	350	167	42	93	1338
EDORA urban/rural type	Number of NUTS-3 regions								total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Predominantly urban	118	125	1	23	83	35	34	18	437
Intermediate	92	117	4	77	143	38	6	33	510
Rural	46	42	11	79	139	97	6	47	467
Total	256	284	16	179	365	170	46	98	1414

EDORA structural type	Share of NUTS-3 regions								total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Predominantly urban	49%	44%	10%	13%	23%	21%	81%	19%	32%
Agrarian	12%	5%	40%	9%	21%	36%	5%	12%	16%
Consumption	19%	30%	50%	49%	37%	35%	7%	56%	34%
Diversified	19%	21%	0%	28%	19%	8%	7%	13%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
EDORA urban/rural type	Share of NUTS-3 regions								total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Predominantly urban	46%	44%	6%	13%	23%	21%	74%	18%	31%
Intermediate	36%	41%	25%	43%	39%	22%	13%	34%	36%
Rural	18%	15%	69%	44%	38%	57%	13%	48%	33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Own calculation, EDORA

Type 7 ‘de-feminising regions’ (n=46) which largely consist of predominantly urban regions in Germany is very attractive for women in their early twenties, but less so for women between 30 and 34. Most of the regions in question are important university towns located in predominantly rural regions, but there also some large economic centres that belong to type 7 like Düsseldorf, Frankfurt (Main) or Cologne. The sole representative of this type in the WOMEN area is the city of Halle (Saale). Type 7 regions are obviously good places for young women to get an education and enter the labour market, but not to settle down. There may be several reasons for that. The ‘defeminisation’ of the larger, economically strong type 7 regions is most likely the consequence of the suburbanisation processes described above. This explanation is supported by the fact that these cities are surrounded by regions that either belong to type 2 or 4 both of which are

characterised by a relatively pronounced surplus of women in their early thirties. The situation may be different in smaller university towns in an economically weak hinterland. There, the local labour markets are too small to absorb all graduates, notably those with very specific skills.

4.5 Summary: Demographic Weaknesses and Challenges of the Study Regions

Summing up, the demographic situation of the WOMEN regions can be described as follows:

Saxony-Anhalt is still faced with severe demographic problems. The state is dynamically ageing and the proportion of retirees in the regional population is among the highest in Germany and even Europe. As a consequence, the natural population development is negative due to a high surplus of deaths. Saxony-Anhalt is an out-migration region, only the urban districts of Halle (Saale) and Magdeburg are attractive for in-migrants. These gains are, however, still too small to balance the exodus from the rural areas.

The demographic situation in *South Transdanubia* is also very difficult. Like in Saxony-Anhalt, the regional population development is negative due to a surplus of deaths and out-migration. Especially worrying is the strong decrease in the share of children. Further depopulation and intensified ageing is the most probable scenario for the future population development of the region. However, compared to Hungary as a whole, the demographic problems of Dél-Dunántúl are not especially severe. The whole country has been in a deep demographic crisis for the last two decades and there are no signs that the situation will improve in the years to come.

Like the aforementioned regions, *Pomurje* also has to deal with a negative natural and spatial population development. Until now, the population structure is still relatively favourable and the decline in the number of children and working-age adults is comparably moderate. Pomurje can be characterised as the region with the least favourable population development in Slovenia. In the – probably not very realistic – case that the internal and international migration streams change and the regional migration balance turns positive, a more sustainable population development would be possible. If the migration trends remain the same, the demographic situation of Pomurje will further deteriorate in the medium and long term.

The demographic situation of *Styria* is ambiguous. The population development around Graz is very positive and seems to be sustainable. This growth ‘trickles down’ to the south-western part of the province which is characterised by in-migration, but also a surplus of deaths. The northern, mountainous part of the province – Upper Styria – is the region with the most negative and unsustainable population development in the whole of Austria. Especially the eastern part of Upper Styria is characterised by a very high share of senior citizens. The most pressing demographic problem of Styria seems to be the sharply decreasing share of children. The number of under-15-year-olds has decreased by 8 to 10 % between 2007 and 2011 in all parts of the province besides Graz and its immediate hinterland. Given that Austria’s population is expected to grow in the foreseeable future, a more favourable demographic situation in Eastern

and Western Styria is possible; however the demographic situation of Upper Styria which is faced with an unfavourable economic and geographic situation will probably remain difficult.

The demographic situation of *Podkarpackie* and *Podlaskie* is much better than in the other WOMEN regions. This is especially true for the sub-regions around the regional capitals Rzeszów and Białostock which are characterised by in-migration and a surplus of births. Most of the other sub-regions of both Podkarpackie and Podlaskie are out-migration regions with a surplus of births, which is, however, in most cases too small to even out the population losses caused by out-migration. The Łomżyński region in Podlaskie is the only sub-region with a surplus of deaths. However, the real demographic situation of both Podkarpackie and Podlaskie may be less positive. Polish statistics use a very narrow definition of migration, hence it is likely that significant proportions of the registered population actually live abroad or in other parts of Poland. The demographic situation of both regions will probably worsen in the future. The regional population is relatively young at the moment, which is the main reason for the positive natural population development. However, both selective out-migration of the young and the strong decline in the number of children outside the Rzeszów and Białostock sub-regions (-8.4°% to -11.4°%) will lead to a deterioration of the regional reproductive potential which will eventually result in an intensification of ageing and depopulation in Podkarpackie and Podlaskie.

5 Attempts to Explain the Female Brain-Drain: The View of Regional Experts (*Rick Glöckner & Karin Wiest*)¹²

In order to expand the knowledge about the living situation of young women in the case study regions an expert survey was conducted in the frame of the WOMEN project. With regard to the importance of female labour force participation for the regional economy the interviews should help to identify regional push-factors for young women in the territories under consideration. In addition to statistical data (see chapter 2, 3), the interviews were targeted to provide insights into the local situation and the problem of the brain-drain of well-educated young women. Furthermore the interviews were intended to raise awareness for gender-related issues of spatial mobility and brain-drain among regional experts. Taking the main fields of targeted actions (Pilot Actions, see chapter 6) into account the survey had its focus on the following fields of interest:

Interviews were conducted in particular with labour market agencies, local businesses, female entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, trade unions, and job centres to learn more about the situation of women on the regional labour market. Beyond that the region's image and educational, cultural and social issues were discussed with representatives of regional and local planning policy, regional planning authorities, regional politicians and representatives of educational institutions (see table Annex II).

The survey was successfully conducted between April and May 2013. Concerning the comparability of the results some problems arose with regard to the study being carried out in six different regions in four different languages. Therefore the findings of the expert survey built on translated English summaries, which may result in some loss of information. Ideally all the interviews should have been face-to-face but some were conducted in writing. The survey made clear that problems such as unfavourable labour market conditions, certain social and institutional barriers, and unfavourable conditions of the regional social and technical infrastructure are common issues shared in all investigated regions. The interviews provided insights into what extent each of these issues is virulent in the regions under consideration and revealed different regional levels and focal points of the mentioned problems as presented below.

5.1 Saxony-Anhalt: Restricted Labour Market and Accessibility

In Saxony-Anhalt five in-depth interviews with politicians, employers, labour market experts and civil society representatives were carried out (annex II). Generally, the interview partners considered missing job prospects for well-educated young women (and men) and low wages as push-factors. Future economic growth is seen as an imminent problem because young people do not see any perspectives and decide to leave. Although rural areas in the surroundings of industry agglomerations and locations of big companies are better off, the majority of job offers is unattractive, low-paid and traditionally bound. All experts consider the job opportunities in Saxony-Anhalt as basically the same for women and men – although they are partly understood

¹² The pictures that accompany the following text are intended to illustrate the diversity of rural contexts in Europe ranging from attractive landscapes, tourist attractions to abandoned villages. They highlight only certain aspects but are not representative for the general situation in the individual region.

as equally bad. The jobs offered in the region are concentrated on the industrial and agricultural sector where traditionally men tend to work and are more likely to be employed while women are considered to choose their profession in typical female fields. Job opportunities for women are mainly located in the services sector – especially in the health care sector, the hotel and restaurant industry, banks/insurances, retail sale, supermarkets and public administration. Ambitions for female entrepreneurship were also perceived by experts. Established enterprises by women show a broad range of facets and can be creative although the majority seems to be very traditional. Female entrepreneurship is mainly a phenomenon made up of micro-enterprises limited to ‘traditional’ fields of ‘female professions’ like the ones named above - especially health services and professions like hairdressers, beauticians or masseuses were mentioned. Social norms and cultural or institutional barriers hampering the labour market participation of women considered by the interviewees are mainly solidified gender role models hindering women to enter the labour market or receiving equal pay. Besides this, infrastructural problems were also mentioned which force women to adjust their working life to the opening times of nurseries, kindergartens or administrative institutions or to public transport schedules. This might hamper the reconciliation of work and family life when it comes to inflexible working times or shift work.

Accessibility, social infrastructure and bonds to the home region

When describing the living situation of young women in Saxony-Anhalt the problems identified were mainly connected to infrastructure and mobility especially regarding the question of how to bridge the distances from places of living to places of work and education or childcare facilities. Even the supply with childcare facilities is very favourable compared to many regions in Western Germany, some experts highlight that childcare facilities are often far away, have inflexible opening times or are of low quality. So if women are somehow not individually mobile, if there are no family bonds where relatives, such as grandparents, can take care of the children, or if there is no support from the employer’s side, such as part-time work or teleworking options, daily life becomes difficult to handle. In combination with the aforementioned low wages, poor professional opportunities for well-educated young women and the lack of cultural offers living conditions in cities might appear more attractive.

However, also positive aspects about the living situation in rural Saxony-Anhalt were named. They are mainly related to favourable conditions of social life like closer family bonds, more solidarity in the rural communities and a vital associative life. Generally, higher security in rural areas was assumed to be a positive factor of the living conditions. Yet these soft locational factors do not seem to suffice for inducing a significant trend of re-migration since they are linked to individual living situations and have no direct impact on the economic situation whatsoever. Only one respondent really made a statement on the reasons for women migrating back to the region, assuming that they leave for new professional opportunities and general experiences in life and then often come back for reasons like starting a family for which they consider their home-region more suitable mainly regarding family networks.

Gender related migration behaviour

All surveyed experts were convinced that there are gender-related differences in migration behaviour, but they had different explanations. Some supposed that men are more willing to

travel while women more often tend to follow their migrating partners and are more emotionally attached to their home region. On the other hand a rising willingness of young women to leave is perceived. Especially well-educated women are supposed to look for different and adequate offers for themselves, which they expect to find in bigger cities or even abroad. Some emphasised that women plan their life and its perspectives more thoroughly than men. Women are also assumed to be more flexible, especially shortly after finishing their school education. When evaluating their living situation they are more critical and more likely to leave when the current situation does not seem favourable. The same experts saw men to be more attached to their home region, perceiving the rural way of life more positively because of their families and circles of friends. Some experts expected women to be more attached to the region by family and traditional family stereotypes while expecting men to be less emotional about their region.

Photo 2: Monastery Jerichow in Saxony-Anhalt

(© Ministry for Regional Development and Transport, Saxony-Anhalt)



Suggested strategies against the brain-drain and existing measures

Generally, the experts expected a growing demand for women on the regional labour market in the near future. The upcoming skills shortage resulting from migration is considered a key problem for the future economic development. Communes and employers are considered as important actors in dealing with those challenges. According to some experts municipalities should think of how to plan further economic development and which means are necessary to facilitate the region's attractiveness for the skilled labour force that should be retained. First and foremost the traffic infrastructure for better mobility should be improved for facilitating the removal of any barriers connected to long distances. From the employers' side concepts are needed to provide attractive environments for skilled workers and to utilise the underused potential of young qualified women by diminishing gender borders, by taking over responsibility for their employees (e.g. qualifications, career perspectives) and by providing support with the reconciliation of family and work (e.g. company kindergarden, company buses and telecommuting). Further solutions and measures to be taken against the brain-drain proposed by the interviewed experts circle around means such as improving the infrastructure and

creating a more attractive work environment by developing innovative working time models, by paying higher salaries or offering additional services (e.g. for childcare) and improving the reconciliation of family and work. Companies and other actors should build up awareness for the problems of young female employees and offer tailored infrastructures to suit their specific needs and those of young people in general. Positioning companies in local alliances for families or entrepreneur networks and better information for younger people by creating information and consulting opportunities are further actions suggested by the respondents to tackle the out-migration of young women. For example, in Saxony-Anhalt numerous projects have taken place preparing pupils for the regional labour market. Especially the so-called 'Girls' Days' was mentioned which are annual German-wide action days for career orientation especially aimed at girls and at professions usually considered less as female professions (engineering, natural sciences, crafts and information technology). ESF-funded projects, pupil competitions and initiatives where female entrepreneurs engage in the professional orientation of girls are other listed projects. Generally, the opinion emerged that those kinds of projects do not yet suffice and links as well as cooperations between schools and business should be closer (e.g. for information days or opportunities for internships).

The supposed added value of image campaigns

Opinions on image campaigns as a way of counteracting brain-drain differed. The majority of the experts see the internal image of the region as important for the process of deciding whether to move away or not. They also noted that the external image is equally important. Only one expert doubted the relevance of regional and local images and argued that the biggest share of applications for jobs in the region comes from outside the region – so a bad image (which Saxony-Anhalt seems to have in the interviewees' eyes) does not seem to be as important as having a job. The interviewees are of different opinions as to whether or not Awareness Raising Campaigns have an impact on out-migration and brain-drain. Some experts emphasised that such campaigns should be thoroughly considered, should be developed as long-term strategies and should aim at a well-defined target group to be successful. Under those circumstances they are assumed to have the potential of positively affecting migration processes. Another group of experts considered campaigns as usually not convincing enough since they all too often do not make concrete offers. Communal development plans and decisions are regarded to be more important.

5.2 Pomurje: Deindustrialisation

In Pomurje a group discussion with seven experts in the field of politicians, employers and regional development was carried out (annex II). The group discussion was supplemented by four individual expert interviews. The experts considered the brain-drain of well-educated young people and depopulation processes to be key problems for the future development of the region.

Discrepancies between qualification structures and job offers

According to regional experts the economic structures of the region are the main reason for the loss of well-educated young women and young people in general. The general lack of

employment opportunities, especially in the service sector and knowledge economies, forces the most capable and productive young people to leave. For instance the area of Goričko (northern part of the Pomurje region) is literally being emptied due to the pronounced out-migration. Another point mentioned by the experts is the spectrum of educational possibilities. This is said to be too diversified in terms of the narrow regional labour market, although there is no opportunity to gain a university degree in Pomurje. This creates a bias between well-educated people and actually existing appropriate jobs – a phenomenon that does not only apply to Pomurje but to entire Slovenia (EEO - EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT OBSERVATORY 2011). Beyond that there are very few opportunities in the region to acquire additional professional skills and knowledge. Especially the support of business start-ups and founding enterprises is underdeveloped and could be improved. Basically a diversified economic structure is missing making it difficult to encourage re-migrants to come back after studying. Low wages and not enough official effort to harmonise educational offers with the actual needs of the labour market are considered to be crucial challenges in this regard. Partly young people are somehow pushed out to other countries where students receive better support or have better opportunities in finding a job matching their acquired qualification than in Pomurje and Slovenia.

Photo 3: Village situation, Pomurje
(© J. Zauneker)



Gender-related migration behaviour and labour market aspects

According to the experts one reason for the loss of young women is that they follow their partners who accept jobs outside the region or simply stay where they finished their studies where the chances to enter the labour market are presumably higher. The latter group is also considered as unwilling to take low-paid jobs. Pomurje does not seem to provide favourable conditions to improve the professional career opportunities of young people. Regarding gender-related differences in migrating behaviours between men and women the experts made no clear statements.

In the expert discussion it was assumed that men are more patriotic about their region and they could be more motivated to re-migrate when they have the chance of taking over farms or family companies. So they might have stronger bonds to the home region. Some of the experts

on the other hand believe that women might be more emotionally attached to the region and therefore less willing to leave. This attitude may also be based on prevalent role models of women being the ones caring for the family and staying at home.

Additionally, significant gaps in the equal treatment of women and men on the labour market could be identified by the respondents. Besides the fact that companies do not at all seem to employ very actively, a stigmatisation of women can be observed. The economy is traditionally governed by men and men are more likely to be employed. Although discrimination is officially forbidden it is often done subtly in job descriptions. Beyond that the willingness to employ women often depends on their age. So it is easier for those over 40 when family planning is most likely to be finished. If younger women are employed and return from maternity leave, they often face a reassignment towards lower level jobs – experiences which some of the interviewees actually had to face. Generally, stereotypes are seen as slowly disappearing but still professions are too much divided by gender attribution. Typical jobs for women are especially to be found in the fields of catering, healthcare, textile industry, tourism, childcare and education, but only few of those jobs are attractive enough for well-educated women. Although there are women known to be the head of development institutions or companies, who are mayors or high-ranking NGO members they are in every case largely outnumbered by men. If there are women who made it to executive positions, they need a lot of support from home where their partners take over family responsibilities. But still, the experts find it hard to imagine a successful company without the working skills of women since they believe that teams operate best when the sexes are equally distributed.

The experts stated that entrepreneurial activities by women are not really widespread and known in Pomurje. They suspected such attempts mainly to happen in the healthcare and educational sector as well as in the field of accountancy services. Known examples of self-employment activities show that opportunities exist but have to be very carefully thought-through before starting. Sociocultural societies or initiatives like networks for female entrepreneurs or business women are missing in Pomurje. However, some respondents also claimed that possibilities to succeed with an own company (for men and women) are higher in Pomurje than elsewhere provided respective opportunities have been properly identified.

Regional image and locational factors

Given the fact that Pomurje is considered to be by far the most underdeveloped region in Slovenia the surveyed experts perceive the out-migration of well-educated young women not only as a threat to the local economy but to the whole local social environment. The external perception of the region is described as very bad by the interviewees using catchwords like 'unemployment', 'failure of economy', 'bad living conditions', and 'unfinished infrastructure' – a picture which they say is transmitted to the outside by the public media. On the other hand positive aspects of living conditions were named like the natural landscape advantages which provide opportunities in fields of food processing, tourism or renewable resources, although currently such activities show no significant contribution to the GDP. Real estate is cheap and more available for young families and close family members can help with raising the children. Locational advantages make the region attractive for foreigners to permanently settle who appreciate living in the countryside and simultaneously having good connections to several big centres like Ljubljana, Zagreb, Vienna, Budapest, and Bratislava.

Strategies against brain-drain

The experts' opinion on the prospects of Awareness Raising Campaigns to counteract brain-drain and to improve the perception of Pomurje is two-fold. Some are convinced that image campaigns are more likely to influence the outside perception than that of its inhabitants. Prior to such a campaign the region has to develop a vision of its regional development and should adhere to it. Recently, a high level of fragmentation of activities between different regional actors is being observed. Generally, image campaigns should promote a positive attitude, highlight potentials (nature, self-sufficiency or social entrepreneurship) and offer concrete propositions. According to the experts they should be well-focused and prepared to secure long-term benefits and influence local opinions. Although seen as positive, image campaigns are said to cost more than they do good. A minority of the respondents even completely denies the effects of such campaigns.

5.3 Styria: Dual structures

In Styria a total of eight interviews with representatives from politics, economy, labour market services and the civil society were carried out (annex II). They showed that insufficient labour market prospects (regarding education and career opportunities in rural areas) and prevailing traditional structures favouring men in certain positions seem to be the most pressing issues influencing the migration behaviour of well-educated young women in Styria, although the overall living conditions were assessed as rather good.

Difficult labour market situation and missing political support for young women

Generally, the overall labour market conditions in the countryside of Styria were held responsible for the loss of well-educated women in this region by the interviewed experts. Namely, missing appropriate jobs, too little career prospects, and lacking opportunities for education were mentioned in this regard. Furthermore, discrimination on the labour market, missing networks and little support for well-educated young women as well as a prevailing salary gap have also been considered as push-factors. The labour market itself is understood by the respondents as rural, which preserves traditional structures and favours men in leading positions consequently narrowing the job opportunities for well-educated women who actually could be qualified for such positions. The region's institutions are perceived as not taking this problem seriously. One interviewee stated that if women eventually leave the region they are one problem less for the regional labour market service (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS) to care about. If women want to find a suitable job, they either have to be very flexible and willing to commute (e.g. to Graz) or they have to go abroad since international experience could be a very important criterion for raising chances of employment back in their home region. But still, the labour market prospects for well-educated young women are bad. Although the AMS supports women with a programme for establishing enterprises such self-employment activities are seen as being the last chance of escaping unemployment. Mostly they are one-woman micro-enterprises in the fields of healthcare and other small-scale services struggling to survive. Besides, no typical professions for women apart from being doctors and teachers were mentioned by the experts.

Unemployed, well-educated women do not constitute a topic noticed by political stakeholders. Therefore the experts do not expect counter-steering measures from that side. As long as there are not enough jobs in total, the problem will not be recognised as one that specifically applies to women. Another interesting statement by a respondent seems to make a case for women not being too involved in the labour market at all. The respondent predicted a decreasing level of qualifications developing over the generations because employed women do not have the time to learn with their children. The school system is not considered able to lead children to graduation without further support by family members.

Favourable living conditions in Styria

Besides these labour-market-centred push-factors the more favourable living conditions in bigger cities represent pull-factors which were also mentioned by the experts as influences on the outmigration of well-educated young women. Especially the shorter distances between home and work, better childcare and leisure facilities, better opportunities of creating networks and the supply with small (first-time-) flats are considered to be attractive factors drawing well-educated young women out of Styria. In contrast to the aforementioned statements, the overall

*Photo 4: Castle Deutschlandsberg in Styria
(© Community Deutschlandsberg)*



living conditions in Styria have been evaluated as good to very good. Especially schools, childcare facilities and the affordability of flats are seen as advantageous factors of the region. They are also considered important for influencing re-migration processes. Regarding the latter the respondents' opinions differ to what extent they exist. Reasons for returning to Styria are mostly seen in connection to

processes and decisions relating to founding a family. So, if women come back after their education, the experts assume that they will then search for higher security in rural areas, for better education for their children, easier affordable living conditions, good infrastructure and – above all – family bonds and support for their private life through existing family structures. However it was also pointed out that significant re-migration will only occur if there are good jobs.

Migration behaviour and its gender-related differences

Regarding general migration behaviours a majority of the experts identified differences between men and women. They regard women as more likely to leave because it seems to be easier for them to self-actualise and to reconcile family and work in an urban environment. It is also assumed that women have to migrate at an earlier age before starting a family which they build their lives around. After founding a family, women often re-enter work after their maternity leave in positions below their educational or qualification level to work close to their families. At

this point, if they decide to migrate at all, they seem to be more likely to follow their partners to more secure jobs. The respondents assume it easier for men to stay in the region since they are not so much involved in family work and are able to concentrate more on their work life and commute longer distances.

Effects of the brain-drain of well-educated, young women and measures for counter-acting

Regarding the question of whether out-migration negatively affects the regional economy it was expressed that it should be seen the other way round - if well-educated women stayed within the region, it would positively affect the economy, provided that they are equally able to enter the labour market and have the same chances to hold leading positions as men do. But women are not yet fully acknowledged as a working force on the labour market. According to some interviewees' opinions they are not deemed to be worth much effort or commitment by employers. The psychological strain for companies to employ women does not seem to be high enough yet, although one respondent sees the recent lack of workforce as big enough so that companies have actually started to make efforts in actively recruiting women. However, employers do not seem to be aware of the resources leaving the region with well-educated women. Women are still often considered as second choice.

So, in this regard, measures to be taken against the brain-drain suggested by the interviewed experts are often connected to establishing links between women and companies (e.g. by information and networking workshops) and to awareness-raising among employers. Social acceptance and the support of young employed women should be strengthened (e.g. by flexible opportunities for day-care or flexible working hours). Furthermore, the connections between schools and companies were often mentioned with the aim of mutually getting to know the demands and offers, exchanging information and building lasting networks from which both sides can benefit. Furthermore, the infrastructure in all areas (notably education, childcare and culture) needs to be further improved and the region's attractiveness and awareness for women should be raised (e.g. by implementing gender budgeting and a quota for women in associations, by simplifying women's access to leading positions, by strengthening women's solidarity and their public presence).

5.4 Podlaskie: Remoteness and Changing Lifestyles

In Podlaskie six interviews were carried out including representatives of politics, science and business organisations. (annex II). They agreed that the bad shape of the economy and the resulting unfavourable labour market conditions are the main reasons for well-educated young women leaving. Furthermore factors like the bad state of the social and technical infrastructure making it difficult to balance family and work are also held responsible for out-migration processes. Interestingly the experts stressed the effect of young people's changing lifestyles, and women's in particular, and see this development as a general process which will diminish gender-related barriers or difficulties in the long run.

Unfavourable labour market situation and difficult living conditions as push-factors

The interviewed experts hold these unfavourable labour market conditions and the missing prospects for highly-qualified career developments as most responsible for the loss of well-

educated young women. Beyond that, the bad shape of the infrastructure and the lack of investments in the region were further factors mentioned. Generally, these factors are regarded equally appealing to men and women. When asked about the living conditions for well-educated young women in Podlaskie most of the experts named negatively connoted aspects. They were primarily connected to the aforementioned unfavourable conditions on the labour market. Another big issue concerning the living conditions is the problem of balancing family and work life which most experts conceive as very hard for most women. For example, women with houses and children do not receive enough state support, benefits are very low and additionally work times are often not flexible and employers have strict requirements. Other elements hindering women to reconcile family and work life are inflexible opening times of nurseries and kindergardens and that it is often a matter of money to get access to good childcare. Differences were made by the experts depending on the sectors women are employed in – especially regarding the difficulties of re-entering jobs after maternity leave. When working in public institutions women usually do not have to be afraid of huge difficulties when returning from maternity leave which is clearly more of a problem in private enterprises.

Photo 5: Rural setting in Podlaskie
(© W. Zajkowska)



Changing lifestyles conflicting with traditional role models

This is also fuelled by traditional stereotypes and role models which prevail among the population, especially in rural areas. However, the experts state that women's lifestyle becoming more and more independent which eventually will lead to discrepancies between what women expect and what is expected of them. One respondent also concludes that the abovementioned problems arising from old-fashioned traditions are decreasingly appealing to younger generations due to a general change in the perception of role models observed by the interviewees. Men are becoming more and more cooperative in family issues and women have more choices and decide about their lives to a greater extent. They tend to self-actualise more often and have higher expectations for themselves and their lives. If they are not able to achieve those expectations within their current living conditions, they start searching for better opportunities elsewhere and eventually leave.

Nonetheless, there are still numerous cultural and institutional barriers or social norms which hinder the labour force participation of women and those obstacles are especially visible in the countryside. The experts expect it to be a multi-generational process to realise a degree of

gender equality like for example usual in Scandinavian countries. But until this ideal is reached the experts identified several difficulties for women on the regional labour market. They located typical female jobs especially in the public administration (which provides relatively safe workplaces for mothers), schools, hospitals, lingerie industry, financial sector, tourism, catering, trade and non-profit sector. In general women do not seem to have equal chances of getting proper jobs, mainly caused by prevailing stereotypes considering women as mothers and therefore not as available as men on the labour market. Additionally, a male predominance, especially on higher levels, has been observed by the interviewees, which makes it easier for men to reach better and higher paid positions than women with the same qualification.

But on the other side the labour market seems to be developing dynamically in Podlaskie. There are a lot more female students than male, female employment is slightly increasing and more often women start running their own businesses, which is still a marginal trend at the moment, but nevertheless visible. Furthermore, the respondents on the one side acknowledged that women are willing to use all chances which occur (e.g. EU-funded projects for female labour force). But on the other side the opportunity of self-employment was criticised by the interviewed experts as being a double-edged sword because it does not make life easier and is often the only opportunity to escape unemployment. Statistics were mentioned showing that three quarters of these businesses do not exceed a lifetime of more than just a few years. Having the future economic development in mind and thinking of the current unfavourable conditions, the respondents are awaiting some shortcomings arising from skills shortages in certain industries. Regarding the scale and extent of this they found it rather hard to estimate, but they clearly perceived the on-going out-migration (of well-educated women and men) as a negative locational factor which has impacts not only on the economy but also on the communities and the immediate families. The experts think that local enterprises are quite aware of the exodus of professionals and that they want to employ the best employees but at the same time they do not pay the salaries they deserve (because either they are not willing to or they just cannot afford it) – and, if at all, they rather choose men, even if women might have the same or even better qualification.

Migration behaviour: Suggested measures to stop the brain-drain

The experts did not notice a gender-related difference in the perception of Podlaskie which in the end would lead to different migration behaviours. Regarding the observance of such differences the experts had no common opinion. The responses showed a tendency to consider women as more ambitious and more mobile because of their statistically higher education. The experts also assumed that they make their decisions more slowly but more thought-through than men. Whether well-educated women are more likely to leave or not, the experts did not answer in unison. Those agreeing with the higher likelihood of well-educated women leaving argued that they are more willing to leave rural areas since they cannot achieve their goals there because they are looking for professional and financial fulfilment and that they are very self-aware of the potential they can offer.

All respondents agreed that well-educated young women would stay within the region if the local job situation were better. But they also pointed out that, besides the job situation, the infrastructure has to be adapted to the needs of young women to raise the region's

attractiveness in comparison to the bigger cities which would still be attractive places to live even if the situation in Podlaskie improved.

To keep people and especially well-educated young women from migrating elsewhere and thus to stop the brain-drain process the experts named several measures to be taken, which, in their eyes, are most important. Therefore the infrastructure and the working conditions generally should be enhanced. Especially the mobility of women has to be improved to enable them to reconcile family and work life more easily. Small towns should provide everything needed for everyday life. Flexible work hours, work from home, better and more easily accessible nurseries and kindergardens, and a general better support for families (e.g. co-financing for childcare, company kindergardens) were also cited. By means of creating better educational opportunities for women to raise their qualification level and by investments in developing female entrepreneurship local job prospects could be directly improved. Furthermore, employers were expected to change their way of thinking, treat employees with more respect and generally invest in human capital more often.

Regional image and its perception

The image of the region is seen from different perspectives by the interviewees. It is often communicated that Podlaskie belongs to 'Poland B' which means the structurally weaker part of Poland. This opinion seems in particular to prevail among young people. But this image is only held responsible to a small extent for the decision to leave, although it could carry some weight and add to the decision-making process. More weight for the decision is placed on the personal and job situation as well as barriers in every-day life which lead to the conclusion to leave. Beyond that, the experts stated that public opinion often underestimates the real chances of finding a job and creates an image of living at 'the end of the world' and is assumed to have impacts on the decision to leave.

Awareness Raising Campaigns for influencing the brain-drain process were criticised by some of the experts, although they acknowledged that they could be very important especially for improving the external perception of the region. But without real actions taken by authorities and entrepreneurs such campaigns are not deemed to have any effect. Although the voivodeship's image was assessed as having improved over the last years the experts also see that a better image does not overcome issues related to work and every-day life. Systemic and financial support, awareness-raising in primary schools or rewards for successful local entrepreneurs (not only financial but also non-material) were listed as helpful in this regard. Furthermore, the question arose as to what could be promoted by such means at all. For example there is no well-developed service sector which could attract specialists. Besides folklore and natural or scenic assets such campaigns have to include opportunities of employment, mainly their availability and stability. Another possibility could be to start an external Awareness Raising Campaign aimed at encouraging investments within the region or the creation of special economic areas as business incubators which could create jobs, because, as one interviewee stated, without jobs all other qualities of the region do not matter at all.

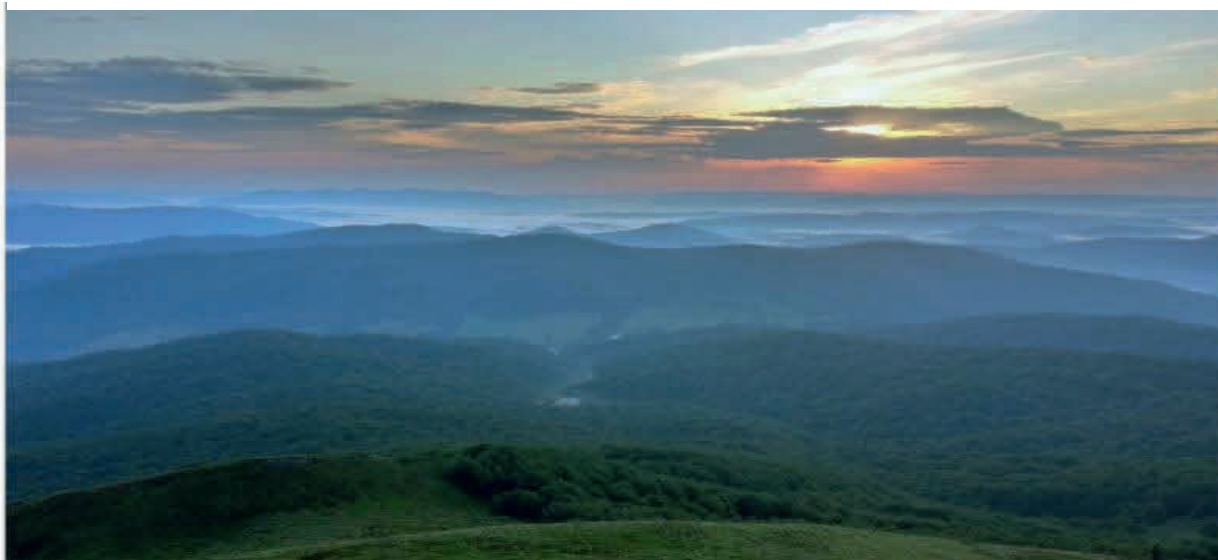
5.5 Podkarpackie: Conservative Labour Market Structures

In the Podkarpackie voivodeship eight interviews with regional politicians, planners, as well as labour market and education stakeholders were conducted (annex II). All interviewed experts identified the bad labour market situation for women and the general lack of attractive, well-paid jobs as the primary reasons for the loss of well-educated women in Podkarpackie. Beyond that, one respondent described the regional labour market as conservative and corrupt which adds to the severity and complexity of the current situation. It was stated that men are favoured on the labour market which makes it difficult for well-educated young women to obtain proper jobs and reach higher levels within companies. Furthermore some additional factors were mentioned like the lack of encouraging offers to stay in the region and that it is often perceived as a failure among young people to stay and not leave. So the possibility of reaching a higher standard of living including more attractive jobs, higher earnings and more interesting cultural offers seems to be a further important factor. Interestingly one respondent named the quite important role of existent migratory networks which people willing to migrate could rely on to facilitate their own migration process.

Another issue mentioned was the educational situation in Podkarpackie. According to one expert, the region offers manifold educational opportunities but at the same time the level of social and economic development remains relatively low. This might be a result of the employers' comparatively low willingness to employ university graduates and benefit from their knowledge and experience – which seems to be an outcome of prevailing traditional gender roles and a general conservativeness of the labour market.

Photo 6: Mountain landscape in Podkarpackie

(© K. Złamaniec)



Labour market situation of women

On the whole the labour market does not seem to favour women. One of the interviewees refers to numbers of the voivodeship's Labour Market Observatory showing that a slight majority of 53.6 % of all registered unemployed were women and 79.5 % among those were educated in a particular profession. Statistically, women are better educated than men but their opportunities

for professional promotion are worse and the majority of job offers seems to be targeted directly or implicitly to men.

The service sector was identified as the main sector in which women find employment but the experts also see a significant potential for further development in this area. Especially the public sector seems to be absorbing a considerable number of women but at the same time they are not considered as attractive jobs since they mostly do not require substantive qualifications. Further sectors regarded as typical for women are: medical services, hotel and catering, education, trade, offices and services like hairdressing or cosmetics. Regarding higher valued and better paid jobs the experts did not see similar opportunities for women because men are still favoured by employers and earn higher wages. According to the experts, women's skills are generally not appreciated. Especially in micro- and small enterprises they are not identified as valuable employees.

Nevertheless, there are employers, chair people and company owners in Podkarpackie who regard women as responsible and involved employees who could contribute to a company and they cherish women as employees (e.g. the Ankol Company which reached the first place as 'Best Employer in Poland' with over 50 % women among the employees). On the other side, the general conditions on the labour market do not provide many opportunities for women's participation and they are forced to take jobs which are unrelated to their profession or below their qualification level if they do not want to leave or be unemployed. A tradition in female entrepreneurship and self-employment could not be identified by the experts but they recognised positive examples of women running own businesses though pointing out that their percentage compared to all enterprises would be insignificant. Additionally, such initiatives are under permanent pressure by strong competition and a mostly difficult financial situation which eventually leads many of them to give up their company. Among such enterprises there are a few medium-sized ones; the majority is made up of micro- and small enterprises which mostly can be found in sectors like catering, trade and other services.

Acknowledging that there is a higher rate of university graduates among women than among men the interviewees assume that women with a higher education might be more likely to migrate for educational and professional self-fulfilment, e.g. heading for destinations like Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław or even abroad. This might especially apply to younger women because it was also pointed out that women become less mobile after starting a family. However, they still might be more likely to leave because their general situation on the labour market seems to be significantly worse than men's, especially when it comes to finding a job enabling them to balance family, household and professional obligations. Generally, it is assumed that women (and men) would stay within the region if the labour market improved in terms of number of jobs and remuneration.

Difficult reconciliation of family and work life

But then there would still be the problem of reconciling work and family life, which the interviewees consider rather difficult to achieve for several reasons. Firstly, they identified a lack of social solutions and criticise the Polish family benefit system as inappropriate. Secondly, young mothers have to face a lack of infrastructure which hampers balancing family and work. For example, there is only a limited number of places in nurseries and kindergartens and often

financial means are not enough to pay for them or hire babysitters. Thirdly, the labour market structure is not favourable for young women with families. Employers are often reluctant to employ young mothers because they expect regular absence from work. Additionally, there are often no or few opportunities of working at home or within flexible working time models and it is often hard for mothers to re-enter work after their maternity leave because they had to discontinue their career and their skills could be outdated. It seems that women employed in public institutions do not face as many difficulties when re-entering their jobs as those working in the private economy.

A gap between regional image and reality?

According to one interviewee Podkarpackie can be perceived as a dynamically developing region, initiated by a range of investments and new educational opportunities which are slowly closing the gap between 'Poland A' and 'B'. Podkarpackie could also be characterised by highly diversified job offers but especially in small towns and villages a high unemployment rate still prevails and the salaries range among the lowest in the whole country. Just like these aspects of regional development show there is a contradiction between the image of and the actual reality in Podkarpackie. The region holds an image of poverty with a stagnating labour market providing only few opportunities for education and development. However according to one respondent, these days Podkarpackie is actually a region where large foreign companies locate their branches which provides a range of opportunities for well-educated people.

However, the interviewed experts expect negative impacts on the development of the regional economy from a developing skills shortage which could be induced by the on-going out-migration of well-educated people. If this process continues, the regions will have to face a lack of qualified employees in near future. This will discourage investments within Podkarpackie which could have created more and attractive jobs. This, in turn, would lead to an amplified out-migration due to a greater lack of jobs. Furthermore, the out-migration of women, especially the well-educated young women, is seen to negatively affect the population development because without young women there are no future mothers and fewer children.

According to the experts, prevailing stereotypes which shape images about Podkarpackie and numerous external influences, reaching from immediate family experiences, creating personal opinions, to the media, which shape public opinion, are adding to the decision-making process of young people, who often perceive their surroundings in Podkarpackie as drowsy and stagnant and are therefore especially receptive for external information on other living conditions. Whether image campaigns are proper measures to influence the internal and external perception of the region or not, the interviewees' opinions differ slightly. The majority admitted that image campaigns could contribute to a better perception of the region and so attract investments and that they could also raise awareness and encourage people to stay. However, without the support of successful actions to increase the number of workplaces and improve the infrastructural framework they will not have the desired effect. Provided the support of such measures, Awareness Raising Campaigns should then present best practices by entrepreneurs, companies and institutions in the areas of workplace creation and the promotion and support of young women (and young people in general) on the labour market.

5.6 South-Transdanubia: Low Economic Innovativeness and Traditional Gender Roles

In South-Transdanubia six interviews were conducted with representatives of university education, administration and business (annex II). They clearly identified the lack of appropriate workplaces as the first and foremost reason for the loss of well-educated women in South-Transdanubia. Although the region provides good conditions for secondary and higher education there are too few opportunities to utilise acquired knowledge properly and so people may be forced to leave. Especially for young people without families and who are not bound to a house it can be an easy decision to move away for better job opportunities and higher salaries. Furthermore traditional role models seem to prevail. Here the roles of husbands in families were mentioned a couple of times within the interviews as important determinants for women's decisions to migrate because they move where they find jobs and their wives follow them (where they stay home and do not work when there are children in the family). In addition, the experts did not identify significant gender-related differences in migration behaviour but distinguish between people with and without family. In this regard men are perceived as more likely to consider migration even when they have family because they are still considered as the providers for the family. Women with family are seen as more willing to make compromises and more likely to stay. Differences in the migration behaviour were especially seen for the group of vocationally trained women, who are regarded to be more prone to leaving than men. The experts assessed them to be more open, flexible and better able to identify opportunities due to their qualification. Typical destinations are Budapest or to the north-western parts of Hungary (Győr, Sopron). Cases of women migrating back seem to be very rare. The experts did not identify good reasons for someone coming back when he/she found a good job and place to live elsewhere. They do not even recognise failure as a reason to come back. It still seems to be more attractive to try it somewhere else – even further away or abroad.

Regarding the consequences out-migration of well-educated young women has for the region, the experts are of different opinion and distinguish between short-term and long-term effects. One of the experts stated, focusing on the labour market in a short-term perspective, that out-migration does not really matter for the regional economy because employers will always find employees with appropriate qualifications due to the high unemployment and free capacities on the labour market. Others think it could become a serious issue in the long run because there will not only be a lack of labour force but also of whole families. Since men rather tend to leave temporarily and send their salaries home, the out-migration of women seems more serious with regard to demographic impacts.

Unfavourable labour market conditions prevailing

The experts assessed the labour market in South-Transdanubia as unfavourable, especially for women due to existent role models hindering them to participate on the labour market and due to a lack of attractive, highly-paid jobs. Generally, the experts see the Hungarian labour market in the middle of a structural change where not enough jobs have been created in new sectors within the region. One respondent mentioned that less than 20 companies employ more than

200 people in South-Transdanubia. Industry is missing and local business seems to be underdeveloped. Therefore the interviewees expect no future increase in the demand and share of the female labour force.

Focusing on the labour market for women one expert stated that a lot of EU funds have been used for integrating women into the labour market, especially in the southern regions of Hungary, but without significant results. When asked about so-called 'pink-collar jobs' the experts did not mention specific sectors but reckoned they could be found in administrative and other office-related jobs. If there are such jobs at all, one interviewee responded, they would not be attractive jobs for well-educated women because they would probably be found in the area of social and health care services. Regarding equal job opportunities most respondents did not identify significant differences in accessing the labour market or when it comes to salaries. But according to some statements it seems that there is a bias in managerial positions favouring men. There are only few female company leaders and only some in middle and top management positions (estimated 5-10 %). They may mainly be found in micro-companies in the service sector. After the tailoring and sewing industry ceased in Southern-Transdanubia 10 years after the communist regime, no tradition of female entrepreneurship has prevailed in the region which holds some significance.

Mixed impressions regarding living conditions in South-Transdanubia

Beyond that, housing problems, problems in childcare (e.g. lack of vacancies at nurseries) and issues in infrastructure and mobility were mentioned by the respondents when asked about the living conditions in the region. The region shows economic and social indicators worse than the national average (e.g. employment and unemployment rate) and they seem to be worsening. Companies have to close or to cut back. Therefore they are not open and receptive for fresh graduates and the universities cannot ensure internships or jobs. Generally, that is why jobs for highly educated people are missing. On the other hand the experts perceived South-Transdanubia as a liveable region with Pécs as an attractive city to live in. They did not consider the image of the region as notably bad and they also did not believe it constitutes the main reason to leave. Beyond that, they did not expect Awareness Raising Campaigns to significantly influence the out-migration and brain-drain process.

The reconciliation of work and family life was assessed by most of the interviewees as difficult yet they did not specifically relate it to the region but to general difficulties which apply throughout Hungary. They acknowledge it might be harder for women because they have to fulfil their tasks on several fronts which could lead to difficulties when employers expect the same performance from each employee. If the educational system and social care would be better organised and more easily accessible, the reconciliation between family and work could be facilitated for women. Although none of the interviewees clearly expressed it, traditional role models seem to be predominant on the labour market. Family-friendly companies and workplaces are not very common.

Re-entering the labour market after maternity leave was identified as another issue in this regard but the opinions on how complicated it is differed among the interviewees. Although it is officially not allowed to terminate contracts during maternity leave, employers often use any

loophole they can find or they set up ultimatums (e.g. mothers are only allowed to be absent for a specific amount of time). They are also said to be unwilling to employ young women who are likely to get children within the next two or three years.

In addition to programmes which try to help young people and women into jobs and to fight the brain-drain in South-Transdanubia, the experts also identified further measures on a regional level. The social infrastructure needs to be improved, especially regarding childcare, further investments in enterprises need to be made to locate and keep them within the region, and working environments have to be adapted to the needs of young women or women with families (e.g. flexible work times, part-time working, and remote working). Regarding the latter, one respondent was afraid that adapting good practices in Hungary could be difficult due to the overregulation and rigidity of the Hungarian system.

*Photo 7: Wine hills in Baranya County in South-Transdanubia
(© HVI Siklós)*



5.7 Comparative Summary and Conclusions

The conducted interviews provided an insight into common problems women are likely to encounter on the regional labour markets in the examined regions and elucidated reasons for the spatial mobility of women. The common problems can be divided into three different spheres – conditions on the labour market, shortcomings of the technical and social infrastructure, and social and institutional barriers for women on the labour market. Although these issues were mentioned among the case studies basically in the same way, they have to be considered in the specific contexts of each region since the perception and evaluation of the experts is influenced by national and regional conditions as well as personal experiences. Table 9 below summarises general and regionally specific problems identified by the experts.

Labour market

The conducted interviews within the 6 case studies strikingly illustrate the perceived importance of the regional labour markets' conditions for the decision-making processes of well-educated young women when it comes to migration. The lack of appropriate jobs for skilled workers with a high education, missing career prospects for this group and comparably lower wages in the rural areas constitute important push-factors leading young women to check their opportunities elsewhere – preferably in bigger cities. Furthermore the inability of most of the case study regions to adapt to new economic structures properly and to develop innovative approaches towards them does not give reason to expect substantial improvements of the current situation.

As a result the lack of opportunities for flexible work, part-time work and tele-work are a common problem addressed by many of the experts. In addition to the lack of jobs to which such forms of work could apply to many employers are considered unwilling to introduce them due to strict structures in many companies. Although migration for educational purposes was addressed several times (especially in Pomurje and Styria) the regional offers for education have not been identified as a main problem adding to migration processes in the regions. Moreover, it was regarded more important that people do not return after receiving their education outside the respective region due to missing job offers in the according regions. Furthermore, the harmonisation between educational offers and labour market needs was defined as necessary to improve labour market prospects particularly for graduates.

Social and technical infrastructure

Besides the mere labour market situation the conditions concerning social and technical infrastructure were often mentioned as unfavourable especially for women with families who want to or have to work. The specific impact of these shortcomings differs slightly between the regions but especially revolves around problems of mobility due to bridging long distances to education or childcare facilities, or of access to nurseries, kindergardens or healthcare facilities, which is sometimes a matter of money and sometimes a matter of lacking vacancies. The effort to cope with such conditions and to balance family and work at the same time was considered by the experts as too difficult or too deterrent for young women, who then rather decide to move to cities where the infrastructural conditions are more likely to be easier to cope with.

Social and institutional barriers for women

Nearly all respondents in the case study regions identified several forms of barriers which young women have to face when first entering or re-entering the labour market. Especially mothers appear to be disadvantaged in most of the examined regions. Although officially prohibited and often not obviously visible, the experts identified different forms of gender-related discrimination in each of the case studies, ranging from salary gaps favouring men over job offers which are directly or implicitly directed at men to putting women into lower paid or lower valued jobs after returning from maternity leave.

Most strikingly almost everywhere the interviewed experts identified a 'glass ceiling' hindering women from reaching higher valued positions in mid- or top-level positions in companies. These barriers are mainly thought to be a result of persistent traditional role models which foresee women at home caring for the children and the household while men are perceived as the providers of income for the whole family. Although some of the experts identified a change in this regard leading to more equality between the sexes regarding organising family and work they also consider old-fashioned values especially persistent in rural areas, which most parts of the examined regions consist of. Notably this matter of gender roles was of different importance to the interviewees in the different regions. For example, in Saxony-Anhalt it was mentioned but generally played a minor role while in South-Transdanubia and in the Polish regions it seemed to be a more determining factor for explaining women's unequal participation on the labour market and their likelihood to leave for better conditions which they mostly expect in more urban areas. These expectations partly come from certain internal and external images of urban areas and the regions themselves. Although the interviewed experts mostly did not hold regional images as primarily responsible for the final decision to migrate most of them stated that they actually could encourage the decision. A common opinion was also that image campaigns could have an impact on the internal and external perception of the respective region but to what extent they are able to influence migration behaviour the respondents were of divided opinion. In most cases image campaigns were only supposed useful if supported by concrete political, economic or civic measures that could be promoted to the outside and attract investors or migrants.

*Photo 8: Village shop founded by two women in Zilly, community in Saxony-Anhalt
(© B. Kahl)*



Final consideration

Generally, there does not seem to be a lack of ideas regarding which measures should be taken to stop the brain-drain of young women reaching from improving hard factors such as creating jobs and investments in technical and social infrastructure to soft factors like cultural and leisure time offers or the general change of traditional role models by Awareness Raising Campaigns or projects. But to achieve significant changes such initiatives which are mostly focused on a rather narrow range of aspects should be integrated into all-embracing concepts including policy, economy, employers and civil society. Here the interviews made clear that the problem of the brain-drain of well-educated young women cannot be broken down to only one aspect since it is a multi-dimensional issue which can only be overcome by a holistic approach (see also chapter 1 and 7). Without such an approach the elimination of just one scope of problems would probably not be substantial enough to achieve a significant improvement for young women (and men) on the examined regional labour markets and therefore would probably have no effect on labour-induced migration.

Nevertheless, the labour market situation was of the utmost importance to the experts because they assumed the proper supply of highly ranked and well-paid jobs – or sometimes even any jobs at all – would resolve the issue which they believe to be the main driver for the out-migration of women. The other problem areas were always thought to be subordinated to this. But as pointed out earlier and acknowledging that jobs may be a priority there is a wide range of different problems which all have an impact on regional labour markets for women in one way or another and which are intertwined.

These interrelations were considered when designing the WOMEN Pilot Actions and the Transnational Strategy to improve the labour market situation for women to stop female brain-drain. Although there have been numerous attempts in most regions to tackle several issues mentioned above (e.g. by EU structural funds or labour market programmes aiming at women or young people) almost none of them were evaluated positively by the interviewed experts. They mostly did not result in significant improvements albeit it can be expected that huge amounts of money have been invested. In the end the implementation of such measures would only partly be a matter of huge financial investments. In most of the case study regions well-educated young women would benefit a great deal from a general change in the perception of their role and potential they could provide to regional labour markets by the employers, politicians or the public. This could probably be achieved with comparably low budgets and show positive long-term results. Beyond that the expert survey made clear that it is necessary to acknowledge the different framework conditions within every case study region which influence the mentioned problem fields in a very particular way.

Table 9: Common and regionally specific problems of women's labour markets in the case study regions

Common set of problems regarding women's labour market situation	
<p>Unfavourable conditions on regional labour markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfavourable economic structures often characterised by agriculture and/or processing industry and an inability of the regional economy to achieve a modern, innovative and competitive status • Lack of attractive and appropriate jobs for skilled workers with a higher education • Missing career prospects especially for younger, well-educated women • Low wages within rural areas • No tradition of female entrepreneurship • Few opportunities for flexible work time, part-time work or tele-work • Mismatch between regional education opportunities and actual chances for utilising high education on the regional labour market 	
<p>Social and institutional barriers for women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent traditional role models • Women often not accepted as fully fledged employees • Discrimination in terms of pay, promotion ('glass ceiling') and job opportunities (offers directly or implicitly directed at men), even though officially prohibited • Problems of re-entering the labour market after maternity leave 	
<p>Unfavourable technical and social infrastructure/Accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long distances (e.g. between home and education or childcare facilities), especially in rural areas • Limited access to childcare facilities (inflexible opening times, lack of vacancies, financial matters) • Missing cultural offers and recreational opportunities that are attractive to younger people 	
Problems/factors specific to the individual regions mentioned by the experts	
Saxony-Anhalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unattractive living conditions for younger people (offers on labour market and cultural and leisure facilities do not match interests of young people) • Lack of regional identity leads to a 'culture of migration'
Pomurje	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General depopulation processes due to economic development (diversified economic structure is missing)
Styria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismatch between perceptions of living conditions, education and career opportunities
Podlaskie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing lifestyles vs. traditional role models • Remoteness and unfavourable living conditions
Podkarpackie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservativeness of labour market • Barriers for women (re-)entering the labour market and 'glass ceiling' issue due to traditional role models
South-Transdanubia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of appropriate workplaces for young, well-educated women due to low innovativeness of the regional economy

Source: WOMEN project

6 Strategies against the Female Brain-Drain in Rural Europe: Lessons Learnt from the Awareness Raising Campaign, Demography Coaching and Networking Activities¹³ (*Matthias Schaarwächter & Anika Schmidt*)

When discussing the outmigration of well educated, young females, and the ways to limit its negative impacts, many socio-economic realities and policy issues come into play that address complex and interrelated issues (see chapter 1.2). Within the WOMEN project several measures have been implemented and tested to contribute to the overall aim of counteracting female brain-drain in the regions under consideration. The main focus of the activities was on the one hand the improvement of employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for young women. On the other hand the perception of female commitment and activities should be strengthened and awareness-raising for local potentials should be fostered. Therefore strategies targeting the labour market and the image of the study regions were in the centre of interest.

The four WOMEN project Pilot Actions were based on the following activities carried out in all partner regions in a similar way:

- Launching a **transnational competition – the WOMEN Award** – to raise awareness for the challenges posed to the partner regions by a continued brain-drain especially of highly skilled young women and to highlight good practice of different local actors.
- **Awareness Raising Campaign** in the public sphere and in companies intended to show perspectives in the regions to provide incentives to stay instead of migrating elsewhere.
- Organising a **Demography Coaching** aimed at supporting employment and career development of young, educated women and the establishment of women-friendly working places and local environments.
- Establishing **Social Networks** of successful female entrepreneurs and senior staff supported by the project partners to increase the social attachment of women to their region.

In the following the implementation of these Pilot Actions will be described. Based on the experiences from the partner regions the lessons learnt will be elaborated and assessed in light of the acquired information to their scope of applicability and transferability to other regional contexts in Europe (see chapter 7). The WOMEN project approach takes into account that the subject area of brain-drain of young, educated women is a multifaceted phenomenon, conditioned by and leading to a large number of social and economic factors. The project's approach is experience-based, pilot-tested and triangulated in terms of data, information sources, and techniques. This should make the outcomes and recommendations of the WOMEN

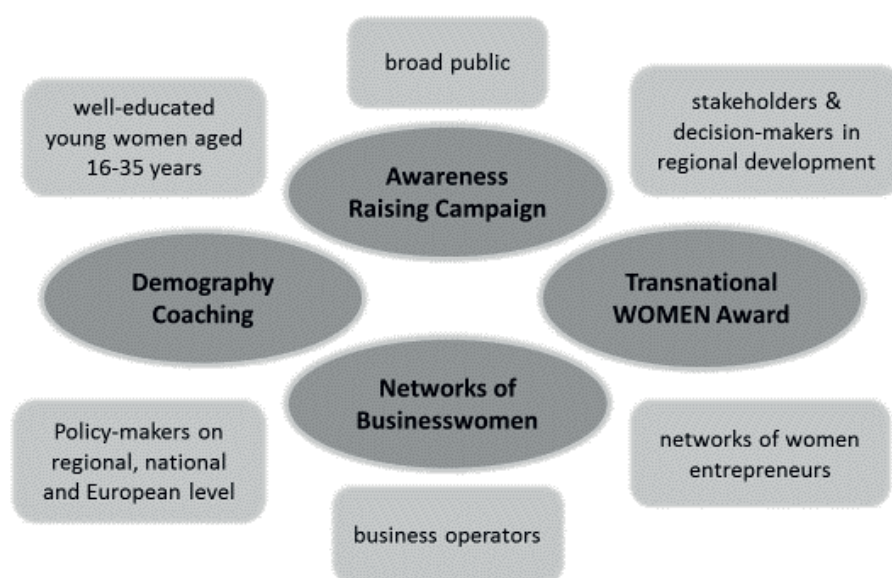
¹³ This chapter comprises results of the WOMEN project outputs "Peer Review Summary" and the "Joint Transnational Strategy against the Brain-Drain of Well-Educated Young Women". For further information see www.women-project.eu.

project valuable to those rural regions in (Central) Europe which are challenged by the brain-drain of well-educated young women, and secondly to all other regions experiencing imbalances and negative tendencies in their gender composition. Aiming to improve pull-factors discouraging outbound migration, the project fosters knowledge development by enhancing the conditions that allow young women to obtain the necessary qualifications to achieve professional careers without migrating. Other points of focus lie in developing actions limiting brain-drain to enhance the economic competitiveness of rural areas.

The target groups of the Pilot Actions are primarily well-educated young women (aged 16-35) living in the six partner regions. Beyond that stakeholders and decision-makers in regional demographic and economic development (local/regional public authorities and other public authorities such as employment agencies, regional development agencies, etc.), business operators (especially those responsible for personnel and organisation management inside their businesses), key actors on national and European levels with policy-making powers, networks of businesswomen and the broad public were addressed and involved in particular Pilot Actions (see figure 4).

The Pilot Actions undertaken by the project partners were subject to transnational peer reviews and scientific monitoring ahead of a review of the elaborated Joint Transnational Strategy as well as the definition of further regional and transnational activities.

Figure 4: Pilot Actions and target groups



Source: WOMEN project

The assessment of the implemented Pilot Actions is orientated on partly quantitative and qualitative methods of impact evaluation (SILVESTRINI & READE 2008). This method is intended to assess the changes a certain intervention of the WOMEN Pilot Action has on the living situation of young, highly skilled women in the regions under consideration. In order to assess in what way the activities contributed to this target, a monitoring of the Pilot Actions was carried out during the life time of the project. It was based on a two-stage review process. Each region was

visited twice by a Peer Review Team. The teams were composed of representatives from three transnational partner regions with at least one representative being an external stakeholder. The aim of the evaluation was to support and advise the partner institutions and to enable a mutual learning process. In the following the implementation, outcomes and obstacles of the different Pilot Actions are presented. The lessons learnt and recommendations from the peer reviews are intended to optimise the activities and to evaluate the actions' transferability. They are a basis for developing and supporting the policy recommendations of the transnational strategy.

6.1 The Implementation of Pilot Actions

6.1.1 Transnational Competition 'WOMEN Award': The Significance of Success Stories

The transnational competition was first of all intended to raise awareness for the challenges posed to the partner regions by a continued brain-drain especially of highly skilled, young women, to highlight good practice of different local actors and to honor outstanding female activities. This aim was transferred by the definition of different award categories and the publicity that was reached through the implementation of award shows. The following three award categories were chosen to raise awareness for the challenges women have to face on the regional labour markets and at the same time to shed light on the outstanding female innovativeness and commitment in the partner regions:

The category 'Key women' honored employed women that succeed in the regions and can act as role models for young women, due to their extraordinary engagement, biography or ideas in economic, social or ecological fields. In the category 'Family-/female-friendly business' businesses that enable young women to reconcile job and family and that offer attractive career options and working conditions especially for highly skilled, young women were identified and awarded. In the category 'Best start-up' women that convinced with an outstanding business idea and innovative concept were honored. The particular criteria to evaluate the applicants in the different categories are listed in table 10 below:

Table 10: Award categories and assessment criteria

Key women	Female-friendly business	Best female start-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribution to the implementation of a business idea • influence on decision-making processes in management • contribution to growth and strategic development of the respective institution • contribution to public opinion-making • solving social, economic and ecological problems • supporting socially disadvantaged persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family-friendly policies • promoting careers of women • equal and fair wage policy • taking on social responsibilities • certain amount of female employees • female managerial staff • flexible working time, which enables parents to reconcile work and family/children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creativity and innovation • leadership competencies and entrepreneurial spirit • potential for sustainable development • long-term potential of the company and for the region (employment) • cooperation with other institutions (schools, local networks etc.) • foundation of the enterprise not longer than 5 years ago

Source: WOMEN project

To ensure a high objectivity throughout the evaluation process transnational teams of three jury members from three different regions were set up (in 6 working groups) (see annex III a). Each team evaluated applications from regions they do not originate from. The selection process was organised as follows:

Based on a preselection of applications more than 50 applications were considered during the jury meeting. In a first round the working groups evaluated the applications according to fixed criteria (table 10). The fact that the jury was built on women with different living situations, turned out to be very helpful in the selection process. According to this concept the jury was split in the following sub-juries to evaluate the applications. Working mothers evaluated the female- or family-friendly business with regard to the key question “Where would you prefer to work?”. Furthermore students and entrants to the labour market evaluated the key women based on the key question: “Who is a role model for you?” and graduates evaluated the best female start-up with regard to the question “Which business idea is convincing?”. The working groups agreed on a first and second place. The two favourite candidates of each group were presented to all jury members according to the criteria and impressions and a ranking of the 18 best candidates was provided and discussed with the whole jury group. Following a joint decision the first and second place in each category was fixed (6 nominations). The winners were honoured at transnational and regional events. With around 200 participants attending, the transnational award show in Magdeburg (Saxony-Anhalt) reached a very high visibility and media publicity (see annex I). The participants included policy-makers, representatives of the public administrations, entrepreneurs as well as representatives of the labour market and scientists.

It can be concluded that the transnational competition was an important part and pre-condition for the success of the WOMEN project. This is due to the following factors:

- The uncovering of female success stories and the promotion of female role models turned out to be on the one hand the most promising factor in raising awareness for the problem of female migration on regional level and on the other hand in enabling an optimistic view on regional prospects and possibilities.
- The award shows fostered networking and new contacts between young women, local businesses and policy-makers.
- Beyond the awareness for the problem of female migration and female living conditions in the studied regions, the applicants, in particular the winners, had the chance to promote their company or business idea to a broader audience.

The following statements give some impressions of what motivates the winners of the WOMEN Award and how they deal with regional challenges. (For an overview of the positions of winners please see annex III b):

„I am proud to be an executive head of Human Resources and to foster the impact of executive staff members in an international company through my exemplary function. As a career advisor, I am proud to support women with the development and implementation of their personal career perspectives in my home region.“ Susanne Busch (Salutas Pharma GmbH, Barleben, DE)

„My heart beats for this region, for Magdeburg, for Saxony-Anhalt. I just want the capable female employees living here to be able to stay so that the federal state continues to grow and remains colourful and diverse.“ Janet Thiemann (Programme ELTERN-AG, Magdeburg, DE)

“I am proud about my readiness to take risks. I get the motivation for this from my children and I actively search for opportunities. Within one year I moved to Białystok and opened my company. I am 26 years old and take the bull by the horns.“ Urszula Martyka (LASTAG, Białystok, PL)

“I am proud to be a successful entrepreneur in South-Transdanubia and to help many families and children to live with autism.“ Eva Klaudia Kovacs, (Pilates Studio, Kaposvar, HU)

“I am proud to be a businesswoman that acts according to the female principle – connecting, sensitive, with long-term targets. I run a company, which offers up-to-date services for elderly people and thus sweeps away clichés about ageing.“ Mateja Hauser (DOSOR Old Peoples Home Ltd., Radenci, SI)

Photo 9: Winners of the transnational and regional WOMEN Award in Magdeburg (© B. Scheibe)



WOMEN Award Ceremony (13th March 2014) Magdeburg, Germany (from left to right): Mateja Hauser (DOSOR Old Peoples Home Ltd., SL), Janet Thiemann (MAPP-Empowerment GmbH, Programm ELTERN-AG, DE), Susanne Busch (Salutas Pharma GmbH, DE), Katrin Simstedt (Bowdenzugmanufaktur, DE), Franziska Hillmer (einfallZreich, DE), Anna Bialik (Argus Sp. Z o., PL), Renate Meidt (Logistic Services GmbH, DE), Kerstin Maslow (Das BILDERbuchCafé, DE), Antje Mandelkow (Kelles Klädener Suppenmanufaktur GmbH, DE), Urszula Martyka (LASTAG, PL), Cornelia Heidrich (PFLEGE mobil, DE).

6.1.2 Awareness Raising Campaign: Successful Mix of Measures

According to the WOMEN project's aims the Awareness Raising Campaign should contribute to a positive image to show perspectives in the regions and to provide incentives to stay instead of migrating elsewhere. Furthermore the award winners were featured as role models in an extensive transnational campaign to improve the images of the partner regions as places where women can succeed. Different tools such as video clips, posters, social media, visualisations (maps, charts), and workshops were used during the campaigns. The target groups of the campaign are foremost well-educated, young women in the age between 16 and 35 years who should be encouraged to seek their professional careers in their home region. An overview of the implemented measures of the Awareness Raising Campaign is shown in table 11. The starting point for implementing each campaign was the creation of a slogan, in some cases developed and designed by the contracted external agencies, in others created during meetings and events with key women that were also intended to be initial network meetings and kick-off meetings for the Awareness Raising Campaign.

As part of the Awareness Raising Campaign all partners regularly produced print and online media measures. Furthermore the project was promoted via online media (e.g. social media networks such as facebook sites and the WOMEN website www.women-project.eu). In general the Awareness Raising Campaigns combined promotion via print (newspaper articles, poster, leaflets) and online media (facebook, blog, videos), as well as events (e.g. press events, networking roundtables, WOMEN Award) along with TV and radio features. In detail each campaign in the respective pilot region was implemented individually and has unique features (roadshows, storytelling in newspapers, portrait videos). The integration of role models and award winners into the Awareness Raising Campaign turned out to be very effective and was considered a cornerstone of the entirety of Pilot Actions, contributing to promoting the social networks of women. The integration functioned as an efficient tool to promote the project's aims and created very positive feedback from the media and public as well as the political sphere. Besides promoting the project issues, the aim of the campaign was the initiation of a public dialogue and to provide a basis for discussing WOMEN issues: The living and working situation of young women in rural areas. In the six partner regions the Awareness Raising Campaign was partly implemented in a particular way.

Photo 10: Billboard in Podlaskie 'Stick to the region'
(© WOMEN project)



Table 11: Measures of the Awareness Raising Campaign

	Styria (A)	Saxony-Anhalt (DE)	Transdanubia (HU)	Podlaskie (PL)	Podkarpackie (PL)	Pomurje (SL)
Slogan	"Connected with the region"	"For me and my region"	"Take a step and stay"	"Stick to Podlaskie"	"Stay here. Create Podkarpackie"	"Better for ...[with different slogans, such as:] ...for my region, ...for my business, ...for all of us"
Measures	Billboards, storytelling in newspapers, Women's shop, kick-off photo shoot	'Roadshow' with role models, 'Blog aufs Land', future dialogues	video interviews (30), kick-off event, video teaser	e-mails to the assumed target group, video clips, radio campaign (key women addressing young girls to stay in the region)	photo shoot, meetings with women, mainly students and graduates in five cities (media coverage), presentation of award winners as role models, billboards	LED screen campaign, networking roundtable, acquiring role-models, photograph and video shooting, publishing videos on digital platforms
	Print (posters, leaflets, postcards, articles/press releases in newspapers) and online media (facebook, youtube, advertisement banners etc.), TV, radio					

With regard to transnational transferability the following measures taken by the partners can serve as examples for good practice:

- In Styria short video portrays of schoolgirls were created to raise awareness and to promote career opportunities within the region. This approach addresses in particular the youngest age group by visiting schools and creating a group of girls, followed by the realisation of short movie clips. This so-called 'school action' was evaluated as a further channel to promote and disseminate the project in the realm of civil society besides common media and the political realm. The activity bridges the gap between the media (print and online) and the addressees of the project.
- Beyond that a storytelling campaign was launched in regional newspapers in Styria. Several articles portraying the role models participating in the Awareness Raising Campaign were published biweekly to ensure a consistent presence in print media.
- As an additional on-site measure so-called 'future dialogues' were conducted in the home towns of the winners in Saxony-Anhalt. These panels further promoted the project by spreading information on demographic change, its consequences and chances in Saxony-Anhalt with a focus on women. Different topics such as image promotion, family support, entrepreneurship, urban and rural careers and skilled labour were debated. The promoted networks participated in the panels, creating additional impact. During the events experiences, opportunities and challenges for a career in Saxony-Anhalt were discussed with the public to broaden the discourse on the WOMEN issues and aims. This kind of awareness-raising through on-site discussion, taking the project issues to the women in the region is evaluated as an effective measure beyond the promotion via print and online media.

- A further innovative approach and good practice is the 'Blog aufs Land' (www.blogaufsland.de, English 'Blog 'go rural'). Written by a 30-year-old woman from Saxony-Anhalt, this blog provides a convenient tool for raising awareness and promoting the project issues. Hereby the potential of online social media communication habits are directly addressed. Written from her subjective point of view and by publishing articles at least two or three times per week, it is a dynamic addition to the common print and online promotion.
- As a joint measure the partners created the 100 Women Portraits on the project website. Those portraits provide a platform for transnational cooperation, exchange and mutual learning between the portrayed women, their businesses and further promoting the career opportunities for women in rural areas.

The lessons learnt from the implementation of the Awareness Raising Campaign contribute to the purpose of transferability. The Awareness Raising Campaigns were effective and successful in every pilot region. Nevertheless as shown above there are major differences in the implementation and the measures taken by the partners within the regions.

The reviews revealed that the Awareness Raising Campaign was effective in those regions, where demographic change is already an issue taken seriously. In those regions with severe socio-economic problems, their relevance outshines the problems connected to demographic change, especially with a focus on gender.

Regarding the comparability of outcomes and response analysis, a unified approach for raising awareness, instead of an individual mix of measures and a place based conception in each region seems to be more reasonable and successful. The experiences show that especially the implementation and conception of individual approaches with a mix of measures guarantees the effectiveness of the Awareness Raising Campaigns within the regions, considering the regional characteristics and individual framework conditions. Moreover the majority of measures was implemented in a similar way in the regions, the online promotion via Facebook, websites, YouTube, advertisement banners, as well as radio and TV features, press releases and articles in print media. In this context the women's blog is an additional promotion instrument that can be transferred to other regions. Besides the combination of traditional (e.g. posters, billboards, print media) and online tools (Facebook, blog) it seems worth considering the transferability of implementing wide-ranging good practices in other regions (e.g. the 'future dialogs').

6.1.3 Demography Coaching: Awareness for Demographic Change and Gender Issues

The aim of the Demography Coaching activity was to raise awareness for future challenges and the impact of the demographic change on the regional labour force with a particular focus on qualified women. A precondition was to train participants as Demography Managers who will use their knowledge and skills on human resources policy in companies and organisations to support the employment and career development of young, educated women and the establishment of women-friendly working places and local environments. In the long run the coaching should contribute to the overall projects aims (1) to improve the labour market access of women, their career and leadership opportunities, (2) to enhance so-called pull-factors reducing the proneness of well-educated, young women to consider migration, e.g. their home

region's image, social networks, and (3) to capitalise on good practices as role models towards key actors in employment and regional development. The factors for the success of the coaching are diverse, every partner realised individual approaches to communicate the content within the seminars.

Regarding the specified training of demography managers, it can be said that the seminars in each region were attended by different groups of participants. In some cases there were mostly consultants/employees of labour market service agencies instead of employees responsible for human resources of companies. The diversity of participants provided great potential as the exchange of knowledge and experiences enriched the seminars.

The seminars conducted in each pilot region dealt with the following topics:

- Demographic situation and trends in the region
- Labour market situation of well-educated women in the region (all partners except Saxony-Anhalt)
- Women entrepreneurship in the region and gender policies on different levels
- Human resources policies and strategies for companies
- Work-Life-Balance strategies
- Qualification of well-educated women in the region
- Out-migration of well-educated women (and men) and the impact on regional development and economy
- Strategies for young, well-educated women to improve business development
- Establishment and maintenance of equal gender policies in companies

*Photo 11: Demography Coaching seminar in Styria
(© WOMEN project)*



Additional topics depending on the region were talent management (in Podkarpackie), corporate social responsibility, employer branding (in Podlaskie and Podkarpackie) and the specific political situation and existing networks (in Styria). In the case of the Podlaskie region for instance, the seminars focused on the creation of a motivation system and bench-marking criteria to be implemented in the companies. Furthermore measures such as trainee programmes for students

and the introduction of corporate social responsibility criteria (CSR criteria) were recommended to attract and tie young women to companies in the region.

Moreover the partners in Southern-Transdanubia conducted individual consulting of companies and organisations apart from seminars referring to human resource policies focused on women (addressed organisations were a university, local NGOs and companies). In Saxony-Anhalt practical solution approaches could be developed during the seminars and the participants brought their company's demographic problems to the seminars. A crucial issue that became obvious, is that the companies are partly aware of problems related to demographic change, but do not know how to solve them effectively.

Besides inviting employees to the coaching, a promising approach is the targeted dissemination of reports to companies and individual consultations of companies. This further promotion of the Demography Coach activity would broaden the scope of the activity in the follow-up of the conducted seminars. A further suggested measure is a web portal aiming to connect companies and young women in rural areas, to encourage and sensitise them for career opportunities in their home region. Once implemented such a web portal is transnationally transferable to other regions.

Particularly the mix of participants has a potential impact on improving the labour market access of women, their career and leadership opportunities. The question as to what extent the coaching affects the human resource policies of companies and the decision-making of participants in general or if the coaching contributes to the aims of the project to convince young women to stay in the region cannot be answered entirely. This reveals one of the major problems of the instrument itself.

Although several seminars took place, the sustainability of the coaching cannot be proven within the restricted time-frame of a project. In regions where economic and labour market problems prevail in general, the coaching shall fulfil the function of raising awareness and sensitisation of problems related to demographic change. In this context primarily Awareness Raising Campaigns shall lay the ground for an effective Demography Coaching. The initial aim to

*Photo 12: Demography Coaching seminar in Podlaskie
(© WOMEN project)*



train demography managers can be achieved more easily within regions where demographic change is already a sensitive topic within the different spheres like for example in Saxony-Anhalt. As a result an advanced starting point and an in-depth coaching can be implemented.

Individual implementation – region-based approaches

During the conception and implementation phase of the Demography Coaching it turned out that each partner had to choose an individual approach regarding the duration and content of the coaching and the type of participants.

A long-term continuation of the Demography Coaching after the project could be ensured with the establishment of a mentoring programme carried out by an external coach. Individual coaching and the content of the seminars shall be conceptualised depending on the degree of awareness of issues related to demographic change in the political and economic sphere within the respective region. Based on such an assessment of the existing awareness or perceived pressure to deal with demographic challenges, the starting point of measures can be defined more tangibly and efficiently. This assessment responds to the different perceptions of problems, e.g. currently only a lack of jobs in the region, instead of a future lack of skilled work force.

Such region-based approaches lead to individual, more flexible approaches. The coaches or mentors should focus on and intensify raising awareness and consultancy within the regional

economy respectively enterprises or businesses. Amongst others they should e.g. consult business associations on opening the door to the regional economy. Besides developing individual tailor-made solutions for the specific situation of each company and its human resources policy, the coach should act as a mediator for the economic and political realm.

Coaching seminars are especially important in regions where demographic change is not yet a well-known issue. In regions where the problems of demographic change are well-known the Demography Coach should focus on updating companies with existing information and conduct individual consultations. This requires an engagement of a demography coach over a longer time span. The long-lasting engagement of an external Demography Coach aims at raising awareness, networking and distributing information. As a consequence of problems to attract small and medium sized enterprises to the coaching seminars that are located in rural areas, it is important to intensify the focus and to channel the effort on these companies in rural areas. Overall, a region-based approach, including a mentoring programme, would be transnationally transferable and effectively contribute to the achievement of the WOMEN project's aims.

6.1.4 Social Networks of Businesswomen: Visibility and Acceptance

The support or establishment of social networks of successful female entrepreneurs and senior staff by the project partners to increase the social attachment of women to their regions was a further task of the WOMEN project. In order to implement this activity in the case study regions the identification of existing networks and of potential network representatives was an important task. Beyond that the question of how to strengthen existing networks with regard to the aim of the WOMEN project and how to identify key tasks to enhance the social attachment of young women in the particular region had to be tackled.

Depending on the fact if a sustainable network already existed in the region or not the project partners had to deal with very different framework conditions: either networks were founded completely new or on the other hand activities related to the WOMEN project were built on existing networks (table 12). When a completely new network was founded in a region often a need for those offers became very obvious like in Styria, Pomurje and Transdanubia. Basically, the new possibilities for women to exchange were considered very positive. Therefore the establishment of such a network has to be considered a great success. A positive influence on existing networks fostered by the WOMEN project could be documented by an increasing number of members, a broadening of offers and partly new cooperation partners.

Table 12: Newly established and existing Networks of Businesswomen in the partner regions

Network	Styria (A)	Saxony-Anhalt (DE)	Transdanubia (HU)	Podlaskie (PL)	Podkarpackie (PL)	Pomurje (SL)
Implementation	New: 2014	Three existing networks	New: 2014	Existing: Since 2004	Existing: Since 2012	New: 2014
Name	SW Styria WOMEN NETWORK	JuEX, Pfiff, KMU	WOMEN	Women's Business Club	Creative Business	Women's Enterprise Network
Main age of participants	20-50 years	20-50 years	30-50 years	40-50 years	20-30 years	30-40 years

Within the networks, the project partners shared the experience that it is crucial to identify and define a suitable and clear network target. Basically a focus on certain groups with common interests (e.g. women that represent the same profession) was considered to be more successful than too broad topics. In most regions networks primarily targeting businesswomen were founded. Nevertheless in some regions also unemployed women were integrated and the network necessarily focused on broader topics. In sparsely populated rural regions it might be generally difficult to find enough interested female entrepreneurs or businesswomen to participate in a network. This circumstance highlights the need to thoroughly consider certain interests of the local population and adjust contents and targets to the local or regional needs when establishing the network.

Networks should support the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences, as well as provide the base to support one another and the individual development. Besides labour market issues, social and cultural issues might be equally relevant to foster the social attachment of young women to the region. The networks should communicate reasons to stay and concrete opportunities to start a career in the region based on the expertise of women and their success stories. The precise objectives of the network should be derived according to profession, age and living situation of the women involved. In some regions networking among young mothers might meet the needs of the local women better than offers for female entrepreneurs. Generally, the mixture of networking events, as different regular events and workshops that are adjusted to the living situation of young women in the regions under consideration has been evaluated very positively. Further ideas to attract more women would be to organise special meetings with special guests, and extraordinary events that go beyond connecting meetings.

The key dimensions to evaluate the success of the networks can be summarised under the two categories 'visibility', 'acceptance' and the added value for the target group:

The *visibility* of the network depends on promotion measures and conducted events. A basic indicator to measure the visibility of the network was the amount of produced promotional materials like brochures, websites, flyers, posters and the number of events conducted in the scope of the WOMEN project. Also the number of visitors per event and the

development of network members indicated whether the Pilot Action was perceived by the relevant target group. Beyond the targeted young women a general awareness-raising for women's needs and a growing influence on political decisions by the target group was highlighted. Accordingly, many project partners supposed a considerable and growing impact of women issues in the regional political context due to the network activities.

An increase of members during the establishment (events) of the networks indicates a successful initiative and a good *acceptance* of the network. This aim was clearly reached in the case of newly founded networks – but not always and not only the number and the increase of members was decisive for the success of a network. The acceptance of networks largely depends on effective communication skills and intense contacts into the public, economic and political realm.

Basically the *added value* for the target group of the network has to be measured with regard to the key aims and offers. The new network being established was considered as an added value and innovation itself by the members and network leaders. The offers, meetings and information provided by these new networks were highly appreciated by the women from the respective region. In the case of existing networks the gain in popularity as well as a stronger cooperation and stronger connections to other networks were emphasised (e.g. in Saxony-Anhalt where a large number of networks targeting the labour market situation of young women already exist).

A key aim of the WOMEN project was to ensure that the networks remain self-sustaining, long-lasting and independent from the support of the partner institutions and project budgets. Since key persons turned out to be decisive for the success of networks it is of great importance to identify personalities that have a strong influence within the region and that are also role models for women. Basically the networks were considered as the most sustainable part of the four Pilot Actions and the long-term perspective was rarely questioned by the stakeholders. The networks were considered to be very important supplementing tasks, not only for optimising the implementation of the other actions. Although the implementation of networks was considered very positive and valuable, the achievement of the overall aim, to create attractive framework conditions that prevent women from moving away, can hardly be gauged. Since an assessment of women who refused out-migration due to attractive social networks or a gain in awareness of regional career opportunities is not possible and unlikely, the added value of the networks cannot be considered isolated but as a part of a strategy.

Beyond learnings from the specific Pilot Actions, more general experiences and recommendations can be derived from the implementation of the WOMEN project. In the following section these overall conclusions of the Pilot Actions are summarised.

6.2 Lessons Learnt from the Pilot Actions

The experiences from the different Pilot Actions undertaken by the WOMEN project partners provided valuable guidance for initiatives addressing the problem of brain-drain of young, educated women and the associated challenges. During the implementation and evaluation of the Pilot Actions the following overall lessons learnt and conclusions could be drawn.

Region-based approaches and actions

The activities in the frame of the WOMEN project made clear that the awareness and knowledge of demographic change and its implications for regional development as well as human resources differs within the case study regions and strongly depends on the political and economic situation and priorities. The evaluation of the Pilot Actions indicated that an in-depth and place-based consideration is a crucial precondition to meet certain needs and demands in the particular setting and to make the action a real success. Region-specific strategies should - beyond others - consider the level of awareness for demographic changes or gender issues within the political and economic sphere as well as the particular situation of young women on the local labour markets, educational possibilities and prevailing family models. On the other hand only the open frame of the Awareness Raising Campaign offered the implementation of an innovative mix of measures and region-based approaches as mentioned in the description of the Pilot Actions (see 6.1).

Synergy effects through linkage of Pilot Actions

The linkage between the four different Pilot Actions turned out to be a very successful way of strengthening the individual measure. In this respect the WOMEN Award was, for example, an important key to support the Awareness Raising Campaign, as the success stories of the award applicants helped to identify female role models. Furthermore, the Awareness Raising Campaign strongly benefitted from the interconnectedness and entanglement with the Demography Coaching and the network initiative. The networks were partly involved in the Awareness Raising Campaign to make them more visible and to foster cooperation. Those possibilities to link the different actions among each other considerably improved the efficiency and success of the individual Pilot Actions. Therefore it is highly recommended to promote the linkage and active entanglement of the actions. For this purpose, a close cooperation between the responsible partner institutions is a necessary precondition. Additional improvements could be reached if existing local projects and initiatives were more closely connected with the WOMEN Pilot Actions.

Target-group oriented actions

A key issue for the success of all activities was the necessity to define on the one hand concrete and narrow target groups e.g. with regard to age groups, certain phases in life and certain socio-economic backgrounds to address them properly. On the other hand it was important to keep the target group open to as many interested people as possible. This applies in particular to the direction of the Awareness Raising Campaign as well as to the establishment and promotion of networks. A thorough consideration of certain target groups with their specific living situation, needs and interests is crucial for the success and acceptance of the individual actions. For

different age groups, specific measures should be taken. In this respect, the defined target group was difficult to address because of the wide age span (16-35 years) and the wide definition of 'well-educated and highly skilled women'. The promotion was largely focused on role models who are older than 25-30 years. This raises the question as to what extent women older than 30 can serve as role models for the younger age groups. The challenge was to address young, well-educated women, prior to or at the beginning of their professional career, e.g. via mentorship and experience exchange between women from different age groups: Here in particular the possibility that experienced women guide young women and benefit from each other has to be emphasised. Especially the younger target group could be addressed via online media and innovative measures like blogs, YouTube videos and additional cooperations with schools or with local clubs to provide information about existing job prospects on local labour markets.

Moreover it is highly challenging to address women who have not yet decided to leave or stay in the region due to career reasons or to reach young women before they decide to leave the region. Basically, the question of whether to only target the highly qualified groups of the population has to be re-considered and adjusted to the local realities. An opening of the target group might be of further importance with respect to very sparsely populated regions in rural Europe and difficulties of finding participants in networks. In this context additional measures such as social media, online platforms and making use of existing networks are important to also reach women from parts of the regions that are difficult to access.

The significance of key persons and role models

In the context of all Pilot Actions the significance of experienced and dedicated key persons became very clear. This applies in particular to the network participants and leaders, the award applicants, the role models of Awareness Raising Campaign as well as the personality of the Demography Coaches. Accordingly it is of great importance to identify key persons that have a strong influence in the region and that are also role models for women. It turned out, that the communication of success stories and the exchange with key persons can create a positive attitude towards the living conditions of women. These positive effects could be strengthened to intensify targeting younger age groups as the identified key women could also act as mentors in the frame of school and training projects.

Awareness for demographic change and its interrelation with gender issues

A clear lack of awareness of the impacts of demographic change and its interrelation with gender issues was recognised among decision-makers and the general public. These issues are often considered inappropriate for policy interventions, either as too complex or seemingly independent phenomena, leaving key problems poorly understood and interventions running short of making impacts on a larger scale, especially in some rural contexts in Europe. Businesses and public agencies are unprepared to deal with demographic challenges. Projects that support the interests of women are hardly prioritised. In particular on a political level and in male-dominated economies the missing consciousness for gender issues was considered an obstacle for the success of the networks aiming at strengthening the role of women on the regional labour markets or in the political field. The Pilot Actions in the frame of the WOMEN project made a valuable contribution to raising exactly this awareness for the living conditions of young women and the consequences of demographic changes in the regions under

consideration. They have made significant inroads in terms of understanding the complex networks of facts and factors contributing and counterbalancing the brain-drain of educated women from rural regions. The Project Partners further their involvement in a variety of programmes and projects both individually and jointly: studies and analysis, as well as interventions in the above-defined development directions. Still, they have limited leverage in terms of global or macro-economic conditions.

Smart sequencing and time horizon of the initiatives

The sustainability of change basically requires long-term efforts and smart sequencing of actions. Structural and mental changes are needed to unfold into larger scale interventions and to ensure effective impacts and lasting results. In order to strengthen the efficiency of the single Pilot Actions it should be considered to first implement the Awareness Raising Campaign and then introduce activities that are more content-related like Demography Coaching. It requires a kind of awareness for the challenges of demographic change and shortage of skilled labour in the region to generate a real demand. A long-lasting engagement of a Demography Coach should aim at raising awareness, networking and distributing information. As prospective obstacles and limiting framework conditions for the sustainability of the networks a lack of funding could be identified. With regard to the lifetime of the WOMEN project an earlier start was considered ensuring more time to establish a network. Basically all Pilot Actions are measures that unfold their efforts in the long-run. Taking that into account the focus should be on the sustainability of the initiatives.

The following chapter provides an overview of the added value of the experiences from the WOMEN project for other regions in Europe. The lessons learnt from the Pilot Actions are transferred into the context of a sustainable transnational strategy to deal with female brain-drain.

*Photo 13: The review team in front of the billboard 'Connected with the region' in Styria
(© C. Krobath)*



7 Transferability and Sustainability of the WOMEN Project Results – an Outlook¹⁴ (*Matthias Schaarwächter, Anika Schmidt & Karin Wiest*)

The out-migration of young women from rural areas is a complex phenomenon which has been highlighted from different angles within this volume. A detailed analysis of regional demographic typologies and patterns has been conducted to identify peculiar demographic pathways and general trends within Europe (chapter 3 and 4). Against this backdrop, selective migration, the socioeconomic structures and the conditions on the labour market of the six WOMEN case study regions have been analysed with respect to the particular situation of young women based on statistical data and expert surveys. Those analyses were intended to specify certain social, economic and demographic circumstances (chapter 2 and 5) and to set the frame for the implementation of concrete Pilot Actions. Based on the lessons learnt from the projects' Pilot Actions (chapter 6), a joint transnational strategy intended to counteract the out-migration of young women from rural regions will be introduced in the following chapter.

While the key elements of the European integration, such as the free movement of people, goods, capital and services, ask for flexibility and mobility of the labour force, related migratory movements may be connected with considerable social and economic costs in particular in regions affected by a loss of young age groups. It has been shown, that the phenomenon of female (out-) migration amplifies structural difficulties in society and economy in particular due to a lack of female work force and the social life of rural communities (see chapter 3). On the other hand structural difficulties deepen out-migration patterns by perpetuating negative perceptions of the effected regions. Taking those insights and interrelations into account gender equality and the reputation of being a region where gender relations allow women to emancipate themselves from fixed gender roles and to participate on the labour market according to their skills has to be considered as an important locational factor and significant aspect of regional development concepts. Prevailing development strategies show, that the effects of female migration on regional development are hardly considered. Since particular needs of certain target groups of the population like for example young, skilled women are in many cases not properly addressed, actions to counteract depopulation processes often remain inappropriate.

Raising awareness for gender issues and initiating changes regarding social and institutional barriers for women can therefore be highly valued as one opportunity to set the course for the development of an innovative, 'new rurality' in Europe, which means to support diverse and explicit female-friendly labour market structures, to foster openness of rural societies, the modernisation of gender relations and all strategies that are suitable to improve the image and self-confidence of a region. Following this insight and based on the experiences of the WOMEN project the chapter at hand aims to highlight how the lessons learnt could be transferred into a sustainable strategy to counteract the out-migration of young women from rural regions in Central Europe. The following considerations shall further the project's results

¹⁴ This chapter comprises results of the WOMEN project output '*Joint Transnational Strategy against the Brain-Drain of Well Educated Young Women*'. For further information see www.women-project.eu.

and promote the perspectives developed in the frame of the WOMEN project based on a transnational strategy.

7.1 Transferring the Project Results to other Regional Contexts and Broader Target Groups

To ensure the transferability of the projects results and to further promote the WOMEN project aims, one has to bear in mind two decisive aspects. On the one hand the transfer of the project outcomes requires considering the different territorial settings and the specific policy contexts that are essentially influencing the way to deal with selective migration. On the other hand, it should also be estimated how and to what extent additional or broader target groups living in rural Europe could benefit from the actions implemented in the frame of the WOMEN project.

Different territorial settings:

The statistical analysis of the demographic trends and patterns, the regional expert survey, and the preparation and implementation of the WOMEN Pilot Actions made clear that different territorial framework conditions and endogenous assets within every case study region impact the mentioned problem fields in a certain way. Each of the regions involved into the project has its own specifics related to the situation of young educated females and their choices regarding a place to work and live (see chapter 2 and 5). Although the prevailing problems in the regions are similar and cross-cutting, each region can be characterised by certain key issues. These particular challenges range from pronounced depopulation processes due to economic development and an absent diversified economic structure (Pomurje, SL), to unattractive living conditions for younger people and a lack of regional identity that leads to a 'culture of migration' (Saxony-Anhalt, DE), to changing lifestyles and barriers for women (re-)entering the labour market and 'glass ceiling'-issues due to the dominance of traditional role-models (Podkarpackie, PL) and a mismatch between perceptions of living conditions, education and career opportunities (Styria, A) (see table 9, chapter 5.7). Cultural traditions concerning the female labour force participation and mother roles are negotiated rather differently in national as well as in regional contexts across Europe. These aspects related to different regional settings have to be considered when for example developing Awareness Raising Campaigns or Demography Coachings (see chapter 6) to design the most appropriate actions. Beyond others the prevailing consciousness for the challenges of demographic change and the significance of gender equality has to be considered. In addition the options to implement concrete strategies and measures to counteract female out-migration are highly dependent on regional policy structures and settings.

Different policy contexts:

With regard to the interrelations between urban-rural disparities and female migration it is in many cases difficult to separate regional and local strategies from national development and even global forces. Basically policy measures aimed at breaking vicious circles that lead to age- and sex-selective out-migration should on the one hand focus on strengthening forces for persistence like e.g. place attachment and social network density. On the other hand policy has to work against the forces for depopulation like weak labour market structures or wage differences. This is, however, a very difficult task not least because these forces operate at

different levels, to some extent determined by globalisation processes. That means that many aspects of young women's migration decisions might be stronger influenced by external factors and policies than by regional and local strategies. Basically the actors involved on regional and local level have limited leverage in terms of global or macro-economic conditions. At the same time the responsibilities of implementing the recommendations derived in the frame of the WOMEN project lie at different political levels. Therefore a multi-level cooperation between municipalities, counties and national competences as well as between different policy areas is required for the realisation of a sustainable strategy. On the local level the quality of cooperation between administration, private economy and associations is a key for the success of individual measures. Another important aspect that influences the applicability of the project results is related to the political power of the stakeholders, their respective competences and their possibilities to implement the recommendations and experiences from the WOMEN project. In this regard the governance background is of utmost importance when discussing the possibilities to transfer the project results to other contexts within Europe.

Broader target groups:

Although the WOMEN project focused on the particular group of young highly qualified females prone to out-migrate, the identified issues and many of the proposed measures generally apply as well to returning migrants and broader groups of the population, in particular to the rural youth. Basically, it seems important to give a say to the young people in rural areas and to support their self-confidence based on diverse measures including amongst others Awareness Raising Campaigns. Beyond that it has to be emphasised that migration decisions of young women and men have to be considered jointly since they are often interdependent and interrelated. Since the migration decisions of young women often take place in the context of starting a family, the regional job prospects of the partner can be an important factor for re-migration, in-migration or staying as well.

Also parts of the population with lower qualifications are a significant and heterogeneous group. Not at least since job offers for highly qualified could not be established everywhere in Europe, development measures for lower qualified parts of the population should not be neglected when aiming at strengthening rural development. As an example it could be more successful and appropriate to foster networks supporting women with diverse or lower qualifications and to train them than solely focusing on highly skilled women. Moreover, in many rural areas also young men appear as a socio-economically disadvantaged group. Surveys taking into account the biographies, expectations and needs of young men living in regions affected by a deficit of young women would be required to supplement the outcomes from the WOMEN project. Supporting young men to adopt modern gender relations or to improve their integration into the local labour market might also have a positive effect on the perception of regional living conditions by young women.

With regard to the addressed labour market issues, the consideration of regional images and infrastructural shortcomings the project findings have the potential to take effect beyond its mere target group, since those aspects affect the living conditions in rural communities in general. Beyond the insight that measures have to be established or strengthened in response to different regional and social settings or policy contexts the significance of cross-sectional thinking when dealing with selective migration will be presented in the following section.

7.2 Fields of Intervention to Balance Female Out-Migration

When discussing the brain-drain of well educated, young women and the ways to limit its negative impacts, many socio-economic aspects and policy issues come into play. Dealing with selective migration in general and the out-migration of skilled young women in particular is an entirely horizontal policy issue (see chapter 1). Even not all developments can be influenced by policy measures at the state or even more on the regional level as shown above, decisions to stay in the home regions or to return after a certain time can be supported by a palette of interventions that improve work and entrepreneurial opportunities, technical and social infrastructure, and build a positive image of women in society and of the region itself. Referring to the results of the ESPON project SEMIGRA, the WOMEN project considered and confirmed the following fields of intervention as crucial when aiming to counteract the female out-migration:

Measures targeting the female job situation and the labour market:

Basically, labour market conditions, policies and practices play a crucial role in retaining or regaining regional talent. Probably, the change of labour market structures is the most important way to counterbalance the brain-drain of educated women. At the same time this field is hard to tackle, especially against the backdrop of the observable and predicted demographic trends. Regional actors are hardly able to shift macro-economic trends or to restructure regulatory frameworks. There are however possibilities to infuse change and changed behaviours both by women and employers towards greater economic participation of women. One option is to support sectors with an average higher share of female employees, like tourism, health care, provision of various types of services. Another is the support of women in traditional 'male' professions – in particular in the technical fields. In this respect also the particular demands of local companies have to be considered in order to identify sectors where a potential shortage of (female) labour is indicated. Apart from that improving the reconciliation of work and family life is usually a win-win option for employees as well as for employers, and requires increased awareness and cost-benefit considerations. Referring to the experts' estimation of the inability or even unwillingness of many employers to introduce flexible work measures due to strict structures in many companies (see chapter 5), it seems highly necessary to facilitate the introduction of new, flexible forms of employment. Offers like job sharing, remote or part time working are important to young women and men, especially in the time of starting a family. As outlined in chapter two and five the labour force participation of women and especially mothers still faces considerable reservations in some European regions. Furthermore rural labour markets are often tight and male-oriented, thus limiting women's opportunities for occupation and career. Apart from out-migration leaving the labour market and staying at home after the first child might be a possible reaction of young qualified women. In this respect a basic change in the societal awareness for the significance of young women for the development of regional economies as well as the functioning of local societies in general is a relevant topic for many rural communities in Europe.

Measures focusing on social infrastructure for young people, women and families:

Regional and local service infrastructure (public and private) is vital to maintain the standard of living in predominantly rural, less densely populated areas. If women are employed, and that

will be mostly in case of dual-earner families, good access and quality of child care facilities and schools, and other basic services are critical. While governments can gain (short-term) efficiency by concentration of public services, limiting access and quality in less populated areas hampers local economies, social structures and regional actors' ability to maintain the necessary social and technical infrastructures. Finding a proper balance with consideration to families' needs is required. Supporting civic engagement, community-based actions, and volunteering can be part of a strategy. Basically, the maintenance of the availability of public services is not only a question of demand and supply, but related to quality of work and social life, as well as the image of a region.

Measures capable of improving the perception and the image of regions:

While structural and economic push and pull-factors play an important role for the explanation for migration decisions, those structures are individually perceived within certain societal and cultural contexts (see figure 2, chapter 3). Consequently out-migration and gender-specific differences in migration behaviour have to be related to societal values, attitudes and experiences on the individual level. In this context a positive attitude towards the region is an important aspect that should be considered when aiming at strengthening the bonds to the home region. Nevertheless, local and regional self-perceptions in Europe's predominantly rural remote regions seem to be rather negative and shaped by the impression of backwardness. This picture is produced and reproduced by public discourses in media, schools and the everyday lives of young people living in rural areas. Making female potentials and contributions more visible can be considered as one way to change rural images of backwardness into more progressive ones. The promotion of attractive female role models contributes to the development of new self-conceptions of rurality and might induce a positive mental change with an impact on migration decisions of young people.

Measures that aim at fully exploiting all possibilities offered by new communication technologies:

New information and communication technologies, as well as new media, such as social networks open up the possibilities to stay connected and updated regardless of location. They can be a great tool for rural communities and regions to access high-value and specialised goods and services. Moreover they can provide direct work and educational opportunities over distance. Thus, improving access to modern ICT (broadband internet, mobile telephony) in rural areas has to be regarded as a precondition for modern living and societal participation. Making people aware of and able to use these technologies is necessary to fully exploit the offered benefits also in rural remote communities.

Since the different fields of intervention are interrelated the WOMEN project followed an integrated approach, intended to strengthen synergy effects between single actions. Therefore the approach can be considered as an attempt to overcome uncoordinated sector policies and to use mutual effects between different fields of intervention in a fruitful way. However, during the lifetime of the project it was feasible to cover some of these fields of action more in-depth while others could only be treated partially or indirectly. The Pilot Actions of the WOMEN project target mainly the fields of economic structures, the perceptions of home regions' images and contributions of successful women to regional development, and to a lesser extent the level of

social and cultural infrastructure for young people, women and families, such as creating family-friendly work and leisure environments.

Summing up the above statements, it is considered necessary to treat the brain-drain of young well-educated women by complex interventions, combining several different elements. The labour market, openness towards new social and economic roles of women and a positive image of the region are directly interrelated factors that strengthen each other. Based on those insights the key elements and necessary preconditions to design a transnational strategy against the female brain-drain are outlined in the following section.

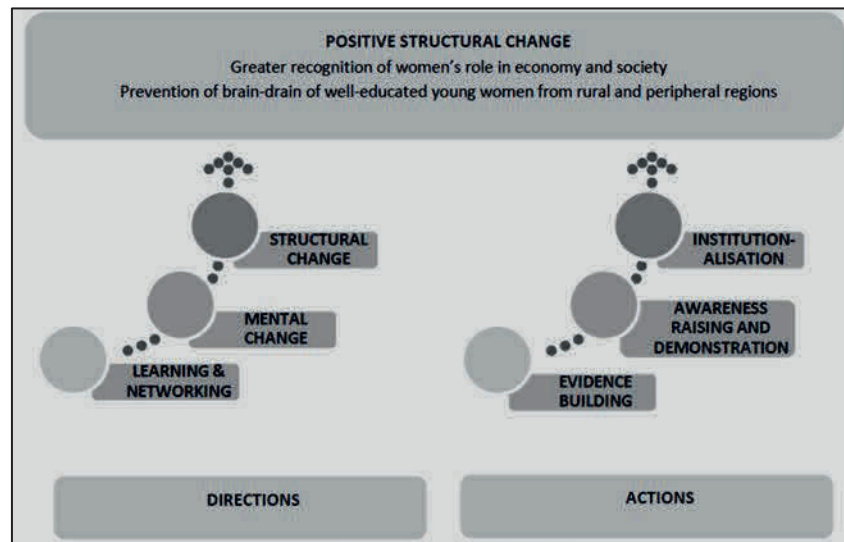
7.3 Implementing Strategies for Positive Structural Changes

The overall vision of the WOMEN project was that predominantly rural and peripheral regions are able to (re-)attract young educated women by promoting female employment and entrepreneurship, improving work and social environments, supporting wide use of information and communication technologies, and transmitting positive perceptions of women in regional development and regions themselves. Basically the most promising policy recommendations to deal with the out-migration of young skilled women are to be conceived as long-term strategies. In general quick-fix solutions are hardly sustainable. This applies in particular for the target to develop a 'new rurality' which requires basic mental and structural changes concerning the labour market structures, the openness of society and the attitude towards gender issues. Therefore long term strategic development perspectives, specifically the EU 2020 goals, and the particular regional situation need to be addressed comprehensively. On basis of the outcomes from the WOMEN project and the experiences from the implementation of the Pilot Actions as there were Awareness Raising Campaign, Demography Coaching and Business Networks the key fields of actions should be fertilised by corresponding programmes and enhanced by additional studies referring to new societal and region-specific challenges. In order to positively influence rural development with respect to gender issues, referring to the lessons learnt and the strategy developed by the WOMEN project partners, the following basic preconditions have to be considered and provided:

When conceptualising the strategic development perspectives a need for structural and mental change, as well as the importance of networking and learning becomes clear. The structural change comprises an enhancement of the work conditions and social frameworks with regard to women's engagement and achievements, strengthening female participation in knowledge management processes to obtain the necessary qualifications to achieve professional careers without (out-)migration. In this respect raising awareness for female potential and contributions to regional development, removing social and institutional barriers for women and informing higher level policies at national and European level to combat the brain-drain can be assigned to the promotion of a mental change. On a local and regional level the focus has to be on improving the openness of rural communities to diversity, tolerance and creating a culture of welcoming. A prerequisite for this mental and structural change is regional learning and networking, which includes fostering knowledge on the causes and effects of migration of educated women and disseminating experiences from communities confronted with similar demographic challenges within transnational learning and practice. The creation of transnational networks of stakeholders from regions facing similar patterns in their

demographic development will enhance a valuable exchange of experiences and problem-solving approaches. Moreover common strategies elaborated with respect to local prerequisites can be tested and implemented comparatively. Against this backdrop the following broad strategic directions as there are *awareness raising*, *institutionalisation* and *evidence building* have been derived by jointly conceptualised practical actions within the WOMEN partner regions (see figure 5):

Figure 5: Development directions and corresponding sets of actions for unbalanced out-migration of women



Source: WOMEN project

- *Awareness Raising and Demonstration:*
A prerequisite for change is the enhancement of awareness and appreciation of women's involvement in society and economy and the need to take early actions admitting expectable skills shortages, be it through informing and mainstreaming policy responses at the EU, national or regional levels. The individual Pilot Activities covered a wide range of methods, such as information campaigns, forums, seminars, publications and the use of traditional, online and social media. Demonstration would include the showcasing of female role models through awards, media stories, mentoring and competitions.
- *Institutionalisation:*
Institutionalisation of the project aims can be achieved through establishing and strengthening existing women's networks and by providing Demography Coaching or a mentoring programme to business and public organisations. Furthermore the design, promotion and implementation of women-friendly work and education arrangements and programmes are essential.
- *Evidence Building:*
Research and the generation of new actions is a necessary objective to provide further impetus. Concomitant research and studies on relevant gender related topics, the development of new programmes and projects and the related evaluation of actions are necessary modules for implementing a strategic development aiming at a positive structural change.

Basically the communication of the strategy is a precondition and important factor for success to stimulate policy changes. In this respect the following four key target groups have to be highlighted:

- stakeholders in regional development and demographic change management within the partner regions (decision-makers of relevant institutions, politicians and mayors of local public authorities, labour market agents);
- stakeholders and key actors from other European regions addressed to consider the transfer and repetition of successful approaches;
- policy-makers on European and national levels whose awareness for the problems related to the outbound migration of well-educated young women in view of the mainstreaming of activities shall be increased;
- the general public to strengthen the societal awareness and readiness to embrace change.

Although the European Commission and its member states pay particular attention to support young people on the labour markets, proper conceptions to deal with the challenges of ageing societies and youth unemployment that take regional requirements and gender aspects into account are still required. Against this backdrop the mission undertaken by the WOMEN partner regions is to intervene comprehensively and with proper consideration of the broader and immediate contexts in response to brain-drain of young well educated women from rural areas. The *Joint Transnational Strategy* developed by the project partners serves as a reference document for the realisation of Pilot Actions, to guide further collaboration of partners on the subject of female brain-drain based on scientific knowledge and good practice from European regions. It is intended to impact policies on European and national level in the sense of a mainstreaming including rural development, gender equality, lifelong learning and migration with respect to the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy not only in the partner regions but also in other European regions with similar problems.

In order to express a firm commitment to sustain the project results in the partner regions and to promote issues related to the WOMEN project a joint Memorandum of understanding was signed on behalf of all Project consortium partners at the final project conference in November 2014 in Stainz, Austria (photo 14).

Photo 14: Representatives from the partner regions signing the Memorandum of Understanding in Stainz, Styria

(left to right: Minister T. Webel, Regional Ministry Saxony-Anhalt, C. Schweiner, Regional Ministry of Styria, L. Sömen, ISD, Pomurje)(© WOMEN project)



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9 Annexes

Annex I: Documentation of Two WOMEN Events Dealing with the Labour Market and Living Situation of Young Women in Rural Europe

In the context of the WOMEN project the Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt and the Leibniz-Institute for Regional Geography (IfL, Leipzig) organised two events that focused on the living and working situation of women in rural Europe. While in the frame of the first event experiences and examples from practice were exchanged, the current scientific state of research was presented and discussed on the second day in Berlin.

Magdeburg 13 March 2014: A Forum for Discussion and an Award Show

In Saxony-Anhalt the shortage of young women has been frequently discussed in the media and is usually interpreted as an indicator for the low attractiveness of the region. Not at least to raise awareness for positive regional development options an event was launched in the city of Magdeburg. The aim of this event was to foster the exchange between policy-makers, young women and employers. Representatives of the government of Saxony-Anhalt entered into a dialog with engaged women from rural regions. Entrepreneurs explained how they especially support women and shared their experiences on how to establish an enterprise. Besides the fruitful discussions the announcement of the winner of the 'women are future – award' and the women's dialog, where networks and companies from different regions in Saxony-Anhalt are invited to present their work and engagement were particular highlights.

After the discussions and the award show different institutions and businesses characterised by extraordinary female- or family-friendly concepts were visited. The fieldtrip starting in Magdeburg led across rural Saxony-Anhalt to Berlin, where the next event took place.

*Photo 15: Discussion with policy makers, winners of the WOMEN award and employers
(© B. Scheibe)*



Berlin 14 March 2014: Scientific Conference Considers Rural Europe from a Gender Perspective

Around 70 scientists from different countries in Europe attended the conference *'Women in rural areas: labour markets, images, policies'* taking place in the representation of the Federal State Saxony-Anhalt in Berlin. Referring to the aims and issues of the WOMEN project the focus of the conference was on the following research questions:

- The question of how young women assess rurality nowadays, to learn more about the needs of the various sub-groups of young women living in rural areas and the values that are basically connected with living in the countryside.
- The peculiarities of rural labour markets, the significance of female entrepreneurship for local economies and the interrelations between labour market structures and gender-related migration.
- The significance of young women as a key target group of rural development strategies against the challenges of demographic change.

The presentations were based on qualitative and quantitative research approaches carried out in studies all over Europe. They highlighted the differentiated character of rurality as well as various living situations and different types of female migrants. In two parallel sessions the following topics were presented and discussed:

First session on images, values and living situations: Rurality from a female point of view

The first session targeted the relevance of living conditions, lifestyle preferences and cultural aspects like norms and values governing gender roles to better understand and explain female migration decisions in rural Europe. A related question was how women perceive living in the countryside and what they consider as key characteristics of rurality. The presentations also highlighted the gendered living situations in rural areas that are often directly connected with the gendered opportunities on the labour market and care for dependent family members. Beyond gender differences in the evaluation of rural life the presentations stated a new perspective and perception of rurality that is related to societal changes in a globalising world. The researcher emphasised that the rural and the metaphor of the rural idyll are first of all a social construct produced and dependent on societal communication processes. In particular the following results were presented:

Gender-related post-modern values on rural peripheries: *Eva G. Fekete, University of Miskolc (Hungary)* was dealing with the thesis that the emergence of new values and trends in recent information societies leads to strengthened needs for nature, culture and safety. Here it was supposed that new societal values offer favourable opportunities for the less developed areas in Europe, especially for rural peripheries. While the rural spaces have resources necessary to start a new way of development, they are in a dual cultural snare. On the one hand, rural policy forces society to follow one kind of modernisation, but most of the rural areas do not have resources for that. On the other hand, local societies are not ready to follow a post-modern way. Local actors have waned, they are weak, traditional and modern values are mixed within their value system. The main question of the presentation was how the pure nature, the sustainability, the cultural heritage and social participation as some basic values for post-modern development are present among the attitudes of women and men in rural spaces. Answers come from the results

of a survey conducted in 9 rural regions in Hungary and Transylvania in 2010. According to the study the relation of local society to post-modern values depends on economic development, the size of the community, the gender composition and the links out of the region.

Women assess rurality. A tailored rural idyll: Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon, from the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain* considered the effects of new ruralities reshaped by globalisation processes that create new relations between many places around the world. In this context some women decide to move or stay in the countryside where they want to develop their own life project. This is a relatively new phenomenon taking into account the steady process of female migration from rural areas that has been taking place in Spain for decades. In-depth interviews with women from two rural areas in Spain were used to grasp how the rural is perceived nowadays and how place matters in female perceptions. Women's perceptions of rurality describe and account for the everyday lives of the rural from a gender standpoint. This is situated knowledge informed by gender, age, class, education and personal histories that connect and often transgress other discourses and meanings attributed to the rural space. The female impressions reflect a tailored rural idyll shaped by the constructed idea and the 'real' experience. Women's critical perceptions of rurality and of themselves as 'rural women' constitute a significant document that says something about daily life, agency, knowledge and future, since it may become a mirror for younger (female) generations.

Pragmatics and paradigmatics: Women in rural areas: Gesine Tuitjer, from the *Thünen Institute* in Germany, tried to evaluate the question of what newcomers and autochthon woman think about a rural lifestyle, which images and roles are connected to this and how these images shape selective migration and the formation of milieus. Insight was drawn from almost 30 narrative interviews with women with very diverse backgrounds such as 'stayer', 'newcomer' and 'returning' women. The results revealed a certain polarisation, and potentially opposing interests, between newcomers and stayers. Most newcomers bring in their own resources such as a car for each driver, while other, mostly 'stayer' households struggle with the desire for public transport. Also, concepts of the rural as a place within nature oscillate between very pragmatic 'a large fenced-in garden' and rather paradigmatic 'freedom and solitude'. Together with these different concepts of a rural lifestyle the formation of spatially separated milieus, ranging from suburban family settlements to 'drop-outs' living on remote farms on the outskirts is likely. What idyllic rural is, is therefore much more dependent on the perspective and the resources for leaving than on the region's characteristics or the place itself.

The evaluation of quality of life in rural versus urban regions: A gender perspective: Nana Zarnekow from the *University of Kiel (Germany)* presented a micro-level econometric analysis of rural households' migration decisions in Poland. Rural migration decisions can be understood as individual households' expression of their preferences for locality-specific quality of life factors, including not only local labour market and housing market conditions but also the locally provided non-monetary amenities. Migration decisions correspond to choices between regionally provided bundles of quality of life factors including local wage levels, employment opportunities and local amenities and disamenities. Accordingly, stated or revealed migration choices can be used to identify the relative importance of different quality of life factors. Using a

choice-experiment approach determinants of individual migration decisions were investigated. Moreover, the interviewees were asked to evaluate quality of life factors in their home community, the community they considered to migrate to and in a metropolis region, respectively. The quality of life factors included: existence of recreation possibilities, provision of health care, neighbourhood quality, employment opportunities, natural amenities and family concerns (schooling, preschool, etc.). Further, gender differences regarding the quality of life, rating of rural versus urban regions as well as gender-specific life-style preferences and migration determinants, respectively were identified.

Exploring female over-migration in rural Spain: employment, caregiving and mobility:

Rosario Sampedro & Luis Camarero, from University of Valladolid in Spain considered imbalanced sex ratios for young and intermediate ages in rural Spain related to female over-migration. While most explanations proposing to understand this trend deal with the poor opportunities in rural labour markets for women, especially for those who have higher levels of education, this study focused on the relationship between rural labour market mobility and gender. The empirical base of their analysis was a recent national survey of Spanish rural population that, for the first time, focused on the situation of people from 30 to 49 years. The data reveal the great extent of commuting among working women of this generation and the strong relationship between commuting and labour opportunities for them. As for the caring of dependent people, the striking data is that the presence of dependent people in rural families has a dramatic impact on female labour activity while men are completely unaffected. Women that live with dependent or aid elderly family members can be found far more frequently among economically inactive or employed in activities more connected to the rural local sphere. As a conclusion it was emphasised that issues dealing with daily mobility and policies regarding caring for dependent people, especially elderly people should be considered at the core of labour opportunities for women in rural areas.

Decentralised rural higher education infrastructure as measure to impede the out-migration of highly qualified, young women:

Verena Peer, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (Austria) discussed the decentralisation of higher education infrastructure as a measure to counteract the 'brain-drain' of the young, well-educated women in rural areas. The investigation focused on female graduates of three selected universities of applied life sciences in rural Austria. Special emphasis was given to the decision-making and action-taking process of the graduates, from the choice of the study programme to their establishment in professional life. The decision to migrate is determined as a result of personally and emotionally influencing factors, the subjective perception of the living environment as well as available information. The investigations revealed that there are study-programme-related differences in the decision to migrate. These differences appear in a variety of expectations in regard to the quality of location, ranging from 'cheap housing', to 'social security' and 'image of the working place'. As a conclusion the decentralisation and regionalisation of HEIS has an effect on mobilising education. At the same time their effect on reducing out-migration of the young, well educated women cannot be proven. Rather the universities stimulate regional development and affect the quality of location as well as the quality of life in rural regions which may lead to a higher retention or return-migration.

Second session on gendered labour markets in rural regions and the significance of female entrepreneurship

In the second session the focus was on the characteristics of rural labour markets in Europe and female job prospects in rural areas. In this context the papers dealt with female career opportunities, the impact of the gender pay gap and estimated the economic potential of female entrepreneurship and start-ups. A specific focus was on the significance of the creative sector as a driver of regional development and often promoted by women. Beyond that a simple urban-rural binary was taken into question by the scientists and the significance of place-based and regional considerations was emphasised. The following research findings were considered in this session:

Women labour force transition in rural areas: Explaining gender differences with socio-professional categories: Ilkay Unay Gailhard, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Central and Eastern Europe (Germany) dealt with the female labour force that stays in rural areas. Her study focused on the role of socio-professional categories (ILO, 2004) on German rural labour transition for women by investigating the following questions “Which socio-professional categories are fulfilled by women as a first time job? How do the determinants such as age, marital status, and profession affect the flow to the undesirable status of unemployed or inactivity?” Firstly a Markovian analysis was provided to understand the trends of entering the labour market. Secondly, gender-specific multinomial logit models were designed to observe how socio-professional categories of individuals are related to flows from employed status to unemployed and inactivity. The analysis was based on the German Labour Force Survey.

Clusters and social cooperatives – the prospect of attractive employment for enterprising women in rural regions: Joanna Sudoł-Pusz, from the Rzeszow University of Technology in Poland described the entrepreneurial dimension of clusters in rural Poland. A number of benefits that may result from participation as a member of this structure were discussed. On the basis of selected examples of social cooperatives the particular role of these entities in the fight against unemployment and social exclusion was highlighted. The presentation emphasised the need to develop the consciousness of women with various forms of support to increase their participation in the labour market. The main focus was on female entrepreneurs who despite the difficult situation in rural Poland have developed their competence, not afraid of the risks associated with starting a business or participation in collaborative networks. The mentioned projects are aimed at women to support the development of social and economic activity for the better use of intellectual capital and resources of their work in the context of sustainable development of rural areas.

Gendered rural labour markets and the intention to migrate – Examples from North-Western Germany: Kim Philip Schumacher, University of Vechta (Germany) considered labour markets in several rural districts of North-Western Germany characterised by apparent gender differences. On the one hand manufacturing and machine building is still of great importance and also the agribusiness and food production. Both being industries that are generally not that much sought after by female employees or are often characterised by female part-time workers or so-called mini-jobs which re-inscribe gender imbalances in employment despite an overall

economic success in some districts. At first the peculiarities of labour market structures and the interrelated issues of in- and out-migration of labour in the Weser-Ems region in North-Western Germany were addressed with special attention to gender differences and qualified workforce. Then findings from a case study conducted in the Wesermarsch district were presented that aimed at unravelling factors of the decision-making process and pupils' intentions regarding leaving their home district after graduating from school. The study showed among other aspects that a majority of the interviewees is expecting to leave the region in the future, regardless of the type of school they attend and that girls are more likely to leave because of a mismatch of the regional labour market and the availability of apprenticeship training positions or tertiary education they are looking for. Beyond that the deficits of the Wesermarsch in the eyes of the teenage respondents were presented which give indications for policy-makers and regional planning.

Women in creative jobs and living in the rural area – A contrast? *Susanne Schmidt, WifOR Wirtschaftsforschung, Darmstadt (Germany)* dealt with the presumption that rural labour market structures influence women's decisions to migrate to urban areas. In this context the investigation of creative occupations was chosen because the share of women in creative occupations is higher compared to other occupational groups. Beyond that the creative sector, which predominantly inhabits the creative occupations, is regarded as a part of the economy which is growing faster than the average sector and will likely lead to innovation and growth impulses in other sectors. To answer the research question of whether there are urban-rural differences with regard to women in creative occupations, the share of women in creative jobs was mapped in all administrative districts of Germany. In order to answer the question of which possible determinants influence the share of women in creative occupations several factors were identified and tested like working-friendly regions for women, prosperous regions, the degree of openness as well as the degree of public provision in regions. Finally, findings regarding urban-rural differences as well as the discussion of possible determinants were presented. It could be concluded, that there are rather individual place-based differences than general rural-urban differences.

Hidden potential of creativity. Entrepreneurship as an alternative of professional activity of women from rural areas in Poland: *Ewa Rollnik-Sadowska, Management Faculty Bialystok University of Technology (Poland)* considered the labour market situation of women in rural Poland. Due to a low level of labour demand in these territories especially for female work, as well as limited access to educational institutions and life-long learning, lack of childcare and insufficient transport infrastructure the labour market situation is difficult for women. Against this backdrop solutions to overcome the barriers of female professional activity development in rural areas and looking for alternatives for traditional employment are required. The objective of the presentation was to determine the advantages of female entrepreneurship in rural areas as the way of boosting professional activity by implementating regional tradition and culture into the commercial process. The study was based on desk research of secondary data and case study analysis: Two businesses located in two different parts of Poland - Silesia and Podlasie, with different historical, economic, social and cultural backgrounds, both of which are examples of cultivating regionalism and the successful professional activity of women were considered.

Summing up, the presentations based on very diverse approaches and methods showed a differentiated picture of the living situation of young women and the conditions on the labour markets in rural Europe. Common research issues became clear in a critical consideration of simplifying urban-rural relations, in emphasising the differentiated and individual character of rural areas in Europe and the discussion about 'rurality' as a social construct.

By K. Wiest

*Photo 16: Speakers at the Conference Women in Rural Areas
(© A. Schweitzer)*



Annex II: Participants of the WOMEN Expert Survey

Region	Name		Position
Podkarpackie	Krystyna Wojtyło		Mayor of Hyżne
	Barbara Przywara		University of Information Technology and Management, Rzeszow
	Leszek Gajos		School of Law and Administration, Lublin
	Bogusława Czachor		Chairman of Commune Council, Trzebownisko
	Dariusz Tracz		Podkarpacki Voivodeship Office, Head of Department Policy and Society
	Konrad Fijolek		Provincial Labour Office, Rzeszow Development Agency
	Katarzyna Podraza		Podkarpackie Academy of Business Development and Training, Rzeszow
	Renata Budryn		Member of Parliament
Podlaskie	A. M Dobrowolska-Cylwik		Deputy mayor of Michałowo, Vice-President of Podlaskie Association of Business Women
	A. Wyszynski		Lecturer and Dean of Students at University Bialystok
	Joanna Waśkiewicz		Member of Podlaskie Ass. of Women Company Owners/Businesswomen
	Łukasz Kiszkiel		Researcher, Department of Social Research Methodology and Statistics, Univ. of Bialystok
	Marta Jarominska		Member of Podlaskie Ass. of Women Company Owners/Businesswomen
	W. Danilewicz		University of Bialystok
Pomurje	Focus group interview	Cvetka Sreš	Head of Regional Employment Agency
		Darja Kadiš	Representative of Municipality of Murska Sobota
		Tatjana Györköš Litrop	Representative of Municipality of Lendava
		Matejka Pajalić	Representative of Municipality of Moravske Toplice
		Alenka Samec Radonjić	Head of General Staff Department at Pomgrad Company, Chairwoman of Council of Human Resources Development
		Rahela Kodila	Representative of Development Centre Murska Sobota
		Ana Šabjan	Representative of Centre for Health and Development
	Viktor Vild		Ambassador of Learning Society in Slovenia, lecturer
	Blaz Gerencer		Head of Business to Business Education Centre
	Sanja Kropec		President of Prekmurje Students Club
	Milan Svetec		Counsellor, Mura Regional Development Agency
	Saxony-Anhalt	Beate Wogawa	
Bianca Röthig		Juex (young business founders project), Regional Women's Council Saxony-Anhalt, Project Coordinator	
Corinna Reinecke		SPD, Member of State Parliament Saxony-Anhalt	
Marina Kermer		Director of Employment Agency Stendal	
Maria Faber		Head of Catholic Women Ass. Germany, diocese of Magdeburg	
S. Kornemann-Weber		Director, League of Independent Welfare Work Association Saxony-Anhalt	
Styria	Marianne Kiendl		Project Leader, Centre for Technology, Deutschlandsberg
	Sabine Thomann		Gender Commissioner, AMS-Leibnitz (Labour Market Service)
	Isabella Pill		Deputy mayor of the municipality of Leibnitz, Styria
	Helga Cernko		zam GmbH Leibnitz, Leader of Regional Unit
	C. Stroišnik-Heimgartner		Biotechnologist without employment
	Brigitte Gady		Regional Leader, Die Woche (weekly regional newspaper), Leibnitz
	Eva Surma		Director "Freiraum" association, Women's Assistance Centre
	Maria Deix		Regional Unit Leader, Chamber of Commerce, Deutschlandsberg
Transdanubia	Anita Bozóky		Strategic and Marketing Manager in non-profit organisation
	Ágnes Cséfalvay		Manager of Vocational Training Department, Chamber of Industry & Commerce, Pécs
	Tamás Vámosi		University of Pécs, Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resources
	Beata Stemler		Director of Pécs Office, Baranya County Government Offices Labour Centre
	Judit Cseh		University of Pécs,
	György Muity		University of Pécs,

Annex III a: Composition of the Jury Members – Evaluation Teams

Profession/living situation of Jury members:	Working mothers	Students/ labour market entrants	Graduates
	Evaluation of female-friendly business	Evaluation of key women	Evaluation of best start-up
Key question:	"Where would you prefer to work?"	"Who is a role model for you?"	"Which business idea would convince you?"
Home region of Jury members:			
Styria (A)	Inge Wurzinger	Viola Brandl	Sarah Steinbauer
Transdanubia (HU)	Kata Stemler	Detti Blaskó	
Podlaskie (PL)	Malgorzata Paszko	Krystyna Bezubik	Magdalena Skup
Podkarpackie (PL)	Anna Wałachowska	Kornelia Cop	Katarzyna Pelc
Pomurje (SL)	Sandra Gjergjek	Maja Hočevár	Sanja Kropec
Saxony-Anhalt (DE)	Petra Laabs/Jacqu.Sell	Bianca Röthig	Janine Koska

Annex III b: Overview: Transnational Winners According to Categories

Category	First Place	Second Place
Key women	Éva Klaudia Kovács, Kaposvár (HU)	-
	Anna Bialik, Jasło (PL)	-
Female friendly business	MAPP-Empowerment GmbH, Programm ELTERN-AG, Magdeburg (DE)	DOSOR Old Peoples Home Ltd., Radenci (SI)
Best female start-up	Renate Meidt Logistic Services GmbH, Bismark-Klāden (DE)	LASTAG, Białystok (PL)

Invitation to the Final Conference of the WOMEN project in Stainz, Austria:



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